SPECIAL ★ ANNIVERSARY ★ ISSUE

SPECIAL ★ TWENTIETH ★ ANNIVERSARY ★ ISSUE

A Monthly Review Edited by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

# THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR

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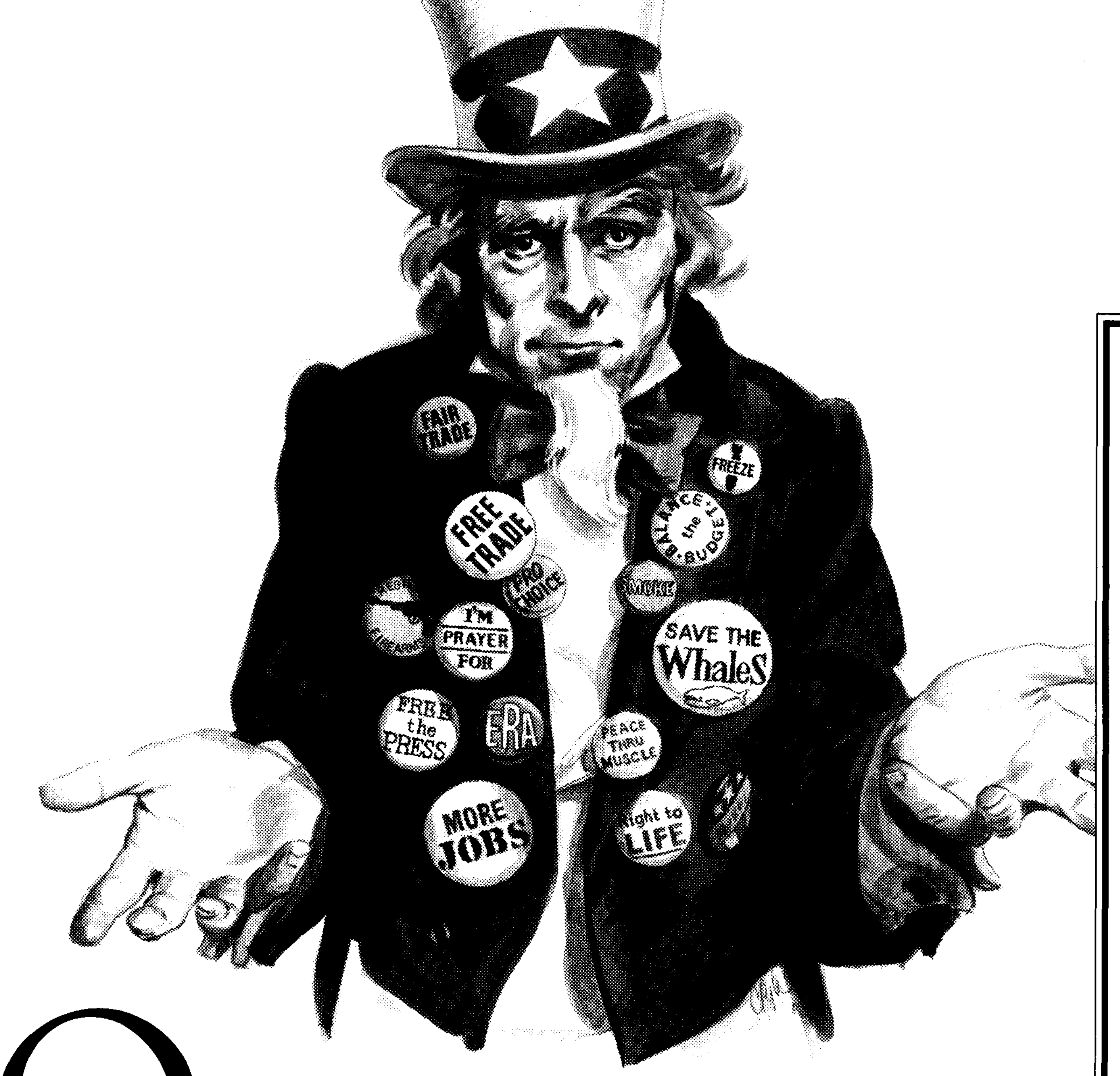
*The People, the Press & Politics*

# WHAT DO WE THE PEOPLE THINK?



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# Zionism — Is It Racism?

Twelve years ago, the United Nations General Assembly passed by overwhelming vote a Resolution that equated Zionism with racism, something to be condemned by all people and by all nations. It was the highwater mark of public anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism. Does this Resolution have any validity?

## What are the facts?

■ Before deciding whether Zionism can be equated with racism, it's important to determine what Zionism really is. It's the philosophy and the movement whose purpose for almost 2000 years has been to restore Zion, the ancient land of Israel to the Jewish people, as its ancestral national homeland. Through centuries of wars, devastation, exile, dispersion and persecution, Zion never ceased to be the heart of Jewish yearning and survival. It was only as Eretz Israel, as Zion, that this land entered into the historical, cultural and spiritual consciousness of the world.

■ Jews have lived in the Holy Land since Biblical times and without interruption. They are the original and the oldest settlers. But it wasn't until late in the last century that this love for Zion found expression in a political movement. It was founded by Theodor Herzl, a totally "emancipated" Austrian Jew, a playwright and journalist. His intellect, vision and energy, his personal magnetism and organizational talents gave expression and action to the age-old Jewish longing for Zion. Modern political Zionism was born. The ingathering of the children of Israel into their ancestral homeland had begun.

■ Sparked by their ancient yearning and by Herzl's vision, tens of thousands of European Jews left for Palestine and transformed it into what Israel is today — a land of verdant fields, lush forests, productive industries and flourishing cities.

■ How about "racism"? It is a defamation of the Jewish faith to link it with this evil concept. It is incompatible with the doctrines of Jewish civilization, enunciated over 3000 years ago in the Holy Bible, in which all mankind is traced to a single human being, created by God in His own image. The two greatest sufferers from the plague of racism have been the Blacks and the Jewish people. It's only today that this cruel yoke has been lifted from the Blacks. The fate of the Jews, as victims of racism, was even more cruel. Because wherever they lived in the Old World, it was only at the sufferance of their overlords — always subject to living in ghettos, having no access to education, being restricted to few and humiliating occupations, and always victims of persecution, murder, rape, confiscation and exile.

■ The suffering of the Jews as victims of racism reached its terrible climax during the Holocaust of the second World War, perpetrated by the German Nazi machine. The Jews of Europe were liquidated in the most horrible manner imaginable — six million of them altogether. The terms "Holocaust" and "Genocide" had to be coined to express this unprecedented disaster, this bizarre expression of hatred and racism.

■ Racism is totally contrary to Jewish philosophy and Jewish thinking. Jews have been and still are on the forefront of the fight for racial justice in the United States, in South Africa and all over the world. The state of Israel is founded on racial equality. And how could it be otherwise? Close to 60% of the population of Israel are what we would call "non-Caucasians". Can such a state be racist? The question is preposterous and the answer is obvious.

■ Israel has been and continues to be a leader in policies that attest to its "non-racism". It has pioneered a hugely effective development program in 31 Black African countries. Israel has organized similar development programs in such countries as Thailand, Burma, the Philippines and Singapore. It was among the first countries to take in Vietnamese boat people. Israel has absorbed into its society hundreds of thousands of refugees from all over the world and without any reference to their race. Among them are the Black Jews of India, Oriental Jews from all Arab countries, and most recently more than 10,000 Black Ethiopian Jews who were air-lifted to freedom in Israel, in a daring rescue operation.

The disgusting equation that "Zionism = Racism" was foisted on the General Assembly of the United Nations by the Arab nations and by the Soviet bloc. It has no basis in fact. Israel is a multi-racial society in which all races, including the resident Arabs and Druze, are treated equally, are represented in the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament), and hold important official and diplomatic positions. For instance, the Israeli Consul General in Atlanta is an Arab. Racism is totally contrary to the tenets of the Jewish religion and to the unwritten constitution of Israel. How does that compare to Israel's accusers? The Soviet bloc keeps its Jews in bondage by not allowing them to emigrate. The Arabs have for the most part expelled all Jews from their countries and don't even allow Jewish visitors. They were the slave masters of yesteryear and some are reported to practice slavery even today. They are mercilessly exploiting Black Africa and other developing countries by their inflated oil prices. For them to say that Zionism is racism is a travesty and an insult to the intelligence of the world.

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THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR.

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# CONTENTS

The Great Relearning . . . . . . . . . . Tom Wolfe 14
*The twentieth century is over.*

The Message of the Microcosm . . . . . . . . . . George Gilder 16
*A computerized world economy does not care about budget deficits or trade imbalances or national borders.*

America in the Year 2007 . . . . . . . . . . Neil Howe 27
*We'll be lots older, paying huge taxes, producing less and less, unless . . .*

Let's Be Honest About Vietnam . . . . . . . . . . Mark Falcoff 32
*If we are to have a foreign policy, liberals and conservatives cannot go on politicizing the war, crying "No more Vietnams!" and hiding behind the Paris Peace Accords.*

An Anti-War Memoir . . . . . . . . . . Jonathan Cohen 36
*I was a grade-school liberal.*

## SYMPOSIA

Astonishing Moments . . . . . . . . . . 21
*Distinguished observers select the single most astonishing development of the last twenty years.*

Books for Christmas . . . . . . . . . . 41
*An* American Spectator *tradition continues: Holiday gift suggestions from eminent readers and writers.*

Baby Boom Influences . . . . . . . . . . 80
*Some of our brightest young writers pay tribute to their mentors and describe the milestones in their intellectual coming of age.*

I Remember Bloomington . . . . . . . . . . 94
*Former residents and employees recall a fabled Midwestern hamlet.*

## DEPARTMENTS

The Continuing Crisis . . . . . . . . . . 8
Correspondence . . . . . . . . . . 9
Editorials/Cheers!/Woodward Unveiled/A Grand Lady . . . . . . . . . . R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. 10
Capitol Ideas/I Hate to Spoil the Party . . . . . . . . . . Tom Bethell 11
Twenty Years of Current Wisdom . . . . . . . . . . Assorted Jackasses 102

## SPECIAL DEPARTMENTS

The Third World/Doomed . . . . . . . . . . P. J. O'Rourke 50
The Automobile/The Love Affair Continues . . . . . . . . . . Brock Yates 52
The Personal Computer/Hack Away . . . . . . . . . . Brit Hume 54
The Press/Our Oldest Profession . . . . . . . . . . Philip Terzian 60
Mikhail Gorbachev/A Lonely Visionary . . . . . . . . . . Vladimir Bukovsky 62
Washington/A World Apart . . . . . . . . . . Fred Barnes 64
The Supreme Court/The Worst Is Over . . . . . . . . . . Jeremy Rabkin 66
Poetry/Another Victim of Creative Writing . . . . . . . . . . Bruce Bawer 69
Terrorism/A New Sense of Professionalism . . . . . . . . . . Michael Ledeen 72
The Sexes/The Endless Chase . . . . . . . . . . Joe Mysak 74
Television/I'd Rather Not . . . . . . . . . . Terry Teachout 76
2007/The Year in Review . . . . . . . . . . Joseph Sobran 77

## SPECIAL BOOK REVIEW

Mencken's Letters . . . . . . . . . . William H. Nolte 87

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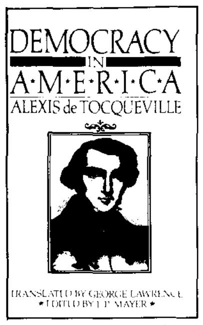
**Thoughts for an Anniversary**



*"Americans regard their freedom as the best tool of and the firmest guarantee for their prosperity. They love them both for the sake of each other. They are therefore by no means inclined to suppose that it is no business of theirs to meddle in public affairs. On the contrary, they think it their most important concern to secure a government which will allow them to get the good things they want and which will not stop their enjoying those they have in peace."*
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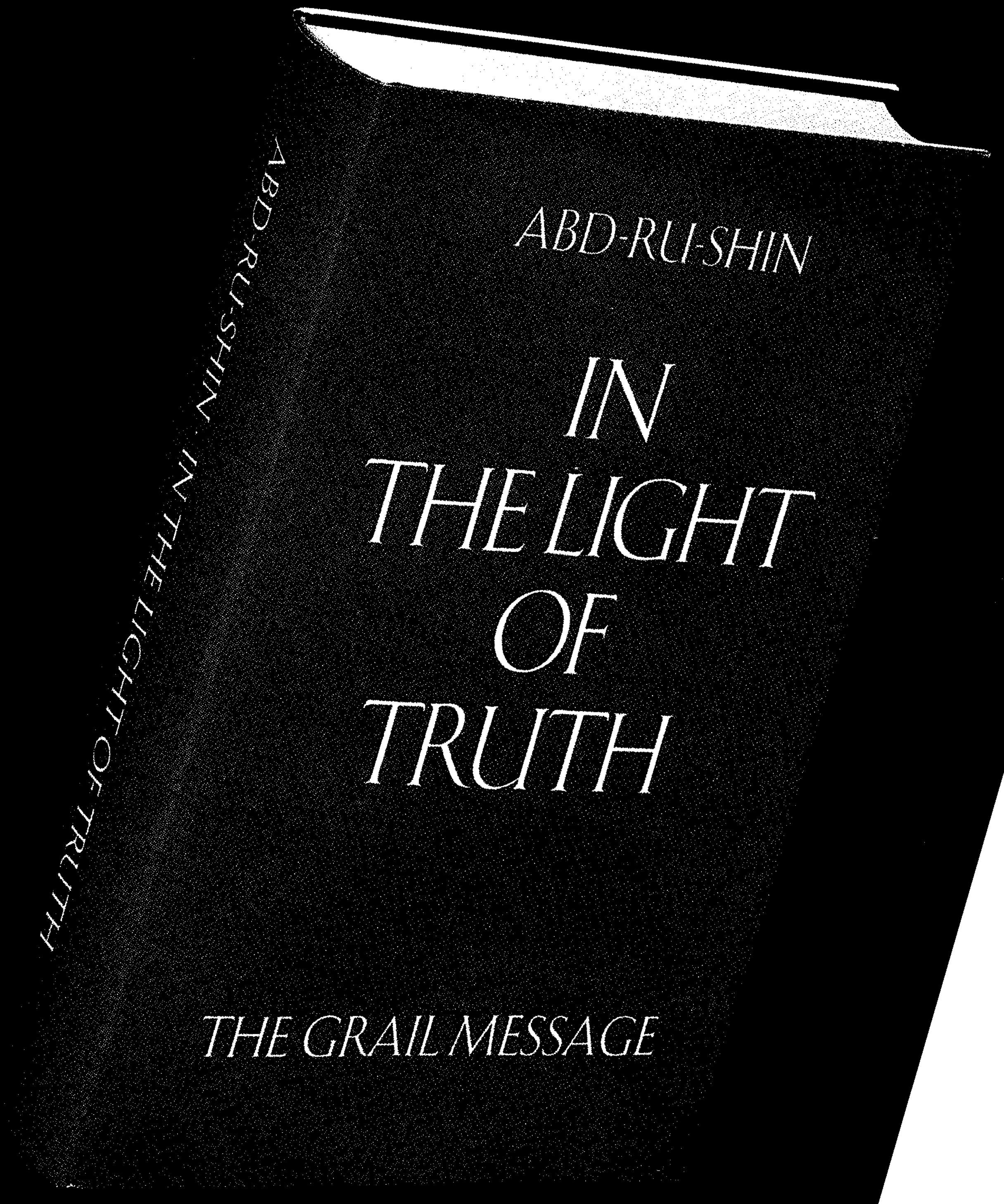

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# CRIMINALS DON'T WAIT.

The one thing that most upsets law-abiding citizens–and rightfully so–is that they are the only ones who obey gun control laws. They are the only ones who comply with the red tape, regulations and costs. Criminals laugh at such systems. They always have. And this is never more true than with waiting periods.

Waiting periods force a prospective firearm buyer to submit a purchase application and wait–from 48 hours to weeks–while police conduct a background check and ostensibly forecast the likelihood of criminal acts by the purchaser. The concept is not new. Congress recently considered and rejected it, as have the majority of states, and for a good reason: waiting periods don't reduce crime. Instead, they create a monumental waste of effort and expense to support a bureaucracy engaged in the business of surveilling law-abiding gun buyers. Because *that's* who waiting periods affect.

This fundamental fact seems to elude waiting period proponents. Criminals do not obtain firearms from legitimate sources and never have. Prof. Philip Cook's study at Duke University confirmed there is "... no convincing empirical evidence that a police check on handgun buyers reduces violent crime ... most felons and other ineligibles who obtain guns do so not because the state's screening system fails to discover their criminal record, but rather because these people find ways of circumventing the screening system entirely." In fact, in states restricted by waiting periods, crime rates climb *faster than the national average.* Douglas Murray of the University of Wisconsin conducted a study for that state's Council on Criminal Justice on the effects of gun control laws, *waiting periods in* particular, in all 50 states and concluded, "The severity of handgun control laws has no significant effect on violent crime rates ... thus far, the relationship between gun laws and crime is nonexistent."

John Lennon's murderer purchased his handgun in Hawaii, a state already awash in gun bans, permit requirements and registration schemes. John Hinckley, the president's assailant, bought several firearms with a valid I.D. and no previous criminal record. Neither of them could have been "found out" under any waiting period yet devised. Laws cannot–and never could–read minds.

Worst of all, waiting periods cause an immense drain on law enforcement resources, diverting police from apprehending violent criminals to conducting investigations into the private lives of law-abiding citizens who choose to own a firearm. And it's no secret who ultimately pays for moving mountains of meaningless paperwork: the same law-abiding citizens.

A better course is clear. America must no longer permit violent crime without certain punishment. Those who commit violent criminal acts with any firearm should face a mandatory additional prison sentence. While waiting periods have failed miserably in those states beguiled into testing them, mandatory penalties for firearm misuse have shown dramatic crime reduction effect in Delaware, Arkansas, Virginia, South Carolina, West Virginia and Florida.

As the *Wall Street Journal* observed shortly after John Lennon's death: "... the sudden hue and cry for more gun control at such times is a kind of cop-out, the sort of cop-out that is part of the problem in America. The country knows that something is wrong. Too many are turning to crimes of violence. The notion that this can be changed by controlling guns, we *worry, may be an excuse for avoid*ing the hard work of making our decrepit criminal justice system start to function, and the even harder work of buttressing what used to be called the nation's moral fiber."

WAYNE R. LaPIERRE IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NRA INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION.

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# THE CONTINUING CRISIS

•October slips by as so many Octobers have since this magazine was founded twenty years ago, and Margaret Thatcher greets us from No. 10 Downing Street: "I send you my warm congratulations upon the Twentieth Anniversary of *The American Spectator.* It has been a beacon of transatlantic conservatism lighting the way to a better future of economic growth, freedom under law, and a strong, united West. This is a future that really works—and conservatives everywhere are in your debt." Meanwhile, Harper & Row publishes *Orthodoxy*, a 500-page, twenty-year anthology of pieces from *The American Spectator*, and just for the sake of balance H & R is also publishing *Perestroika* by Mikhail Gorbachev, the greatest Russian political philosopher since Peter the Great.

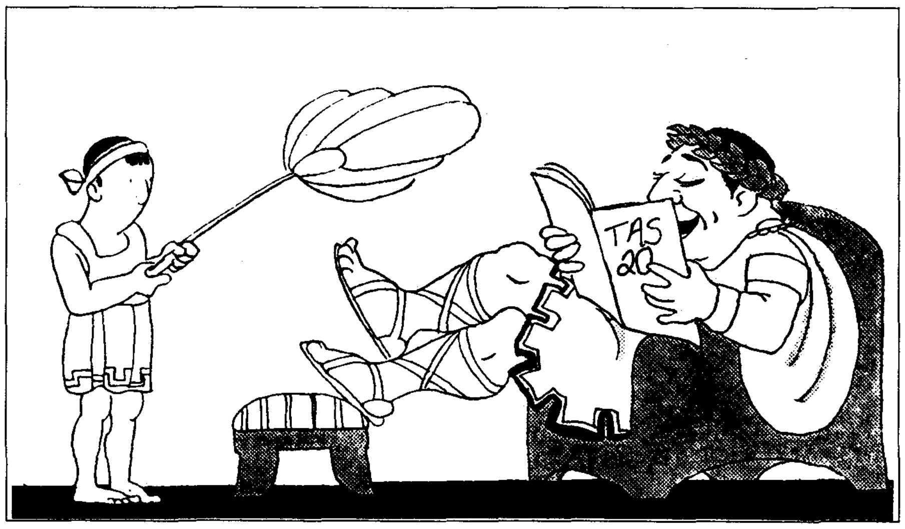
•October was also the most joyous month for the loyal opposition in many a moon. Judge Bork was defeated in the Senate, and his calumniators sharpened their knives for his replacement, Mr. Douglas Ginsburg. Mr. Alf Landon died, and Mrs. Nancy Reagan had surgery. Then, mirabile dictu, on October 19 the stock market fell 508 points, closing at 1734! That is just 784 points above where the market stood on Jimmy Carter's last day in office. Moreover, the government announced that September unemployment was at the lowest level in eight years, the September Consumer Price Index was up only 0.2 percent, and GNP for the third quarter was up a snappy 3.8 percent. So maybe it was not such a great month for the loyal opposition after all.

•In sports news, that four-week-old National Football League strike wilted after team owners, ignoring the laments of their mesomorphic prima donnas, fielded substitute meathead hordes who proved that, though poorly trained, they could be equally soporific. Mr. Tommy (Muskrat) Greene announced his intention to unify the world seafood-gulping title. Mr. Greene already holds the snail-swallowing title (220 in under three minutes) and the oyster title (288 in two minutes and forty-three seconds). But he now aspires to the shrimp title of three pounds in four minutes and eight seconds and the clam title of 424 little necks in eight minutes established back in 1975 by the legendary Mr. Dave Barnes of Port Townsend Bay, Washington. The Minnesota Twins won the World Series. And in Great Yarmouth, England, Mr. King Kong Kirk (no relation to Russell), the wrestler, perished when his 336-pound opponent, Mr. Big Daddy, capered across the ring and landed atop him. Mr. Kirk himself was no flyweight, weighing in at 350 pounds, but apparently all that beef had the consistency of angel food cake, and it was not prudent of him to tarry before the oncoming Mr. Big Daddy. In Rochester, New York, Mrs. Mary Jo Lane's dramatic departure from her wedding astride her groom's motorcycle ended abruptly and with contusions after her wedding gown became entangled in the cycle's wheels.

•Los Angeles was wobbled by the worst earthquake to afflict that city in sixteen years. The Rev. Pat Robertson declared his candidacy for the Republican presidential nomination, and the New York City affiliate of the American Heart Association published the 1987 edition of its New York restaurant guide for hypochondriacs given to margarine, skim milk, abstinence from salt, and condom dispensers in every restroom. Manhattan's popular host of WNYM-AM's health and fitness program, Dr. Fred J. Benjamin, died at age 48, twenty-three years short of the average life expectancy for an American male.

•On October 8 three Iranian patrol boats were destroyed by American helicopters in the Persian Gulf, and on October 19 U.S. Naval units destroyed two deadly Iranian oil rigs in retaliation for an Iranian missile attack on a reflagged tanker. A front-page story in the *Des Moines Register* reports that Democratic presidential candidate Rev. Jesse Jackson is pursuing the women's vote one skirt at a time and has been for years. In Minneapolis, another 1970s messiah came a cropper when Mr. Acie Huggins, Jr., founder of that Great Society gold mine, the now-defunct Huggins Youth Training Center, was jugged on charges of distributing marijuana and receiving stolen goods at his residence, now named the Huggins Youth Club. "It looked like kids were exchanging stolen goods for dope," noted Sgt. David Niebur, a detective assigned to the case; though all the cops know for sure is that Mr. Huggins and two teenage girls were packaging a bin of loose marijuana into neat little bags. Miss Jane Fonda cancelled a tour to promote her new videocassette after a fall from her bicycle, and Nabisco's plans to promote the tape on boxes of Shredded Wheat were thwarted by New York radio host Mr. Bob Grant and a band of Vietnam Veterans with memories that stretch all the way back to that remote time when Hollywood actresses visited American POWs in their cells and subsequently described them as "hypocrites and cowards."

•Hoping to break up a narcotics ring, Italian police swooped down on Sicily's largest hospital, Citizen's Hospital in Palermo, and instead uncovered three of the oldest vices known to man: a private chicken farm in the cancer ward, a fig plantation in the intensive care unit, and dozens of unauthorized cats sauntering through hallways. In Los Angeles, California, the promises of the Founding Fathers were realized when the Huntington Beach Union School District changed its policy toward Miss Vicki Ann Guest and notified her that her breasts were not too large for her to be a high-school cheerleader. Last year, Miss Guest's lawyer filed a $1-million lawsuit against the school district after a teacher, Miss Jean Clower, advised her that her gigantic bosom made it quite unthinkable for her to be a cheerleader and advised that she have her breasts surgically reduced if she hoped ever to see her toes again.



•In Jacksonville, Florida, Mr. Ernest E. Polston pleaded not guilty to charges that he removed the upper dental plate from the unwilling mouth of his girlfriend, Miss Teresa Swain, after hearing that she was seeing other men. A federal advisory jury rejected a suit brought against the federal government by Haitian males who claimed that their treatment in a Florida detention camp had caused their breasts to enlarge to the point that they might not have been allowed to be cheerleaders in pre-Enlightenment Huntington Beach. On October 12 Vice President George Bush announced his candidacy for the presidency in Houston, Texas. Mrs. Nancy Reagan was again passed over when the Nobel Prize for Peace was awarded to Mr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, president of Costa Rica, and *The American Spectator* lost two good friends with the deaths of Miss Clare Boothe Luce and Mr. Sarkes Tarzian. Mr. David Millar, the first man to appear in television advertisements for Marlboro cigarettes, died at 81 of emphysema, though he had not had a smoke in twenty years.

•The illustrious *National Enquirer* reported that Mr. Paul DuPont has been found sitting by the graveside of his deceased wife, Nena. Mrs. DuPont passed away in January 1977, and Mr. DuPont has spent almost every day sitting in the cemetery with her somewhere in Miami. The *National Enquirer* offers no further details about the cemetery's whereabouts. The hymnal committee of the United Methodist Church has confected two songs that refer to God as "Mother," one of which reads, "Strong mother God, working night and day/Planning all the wonders of creation/Setting each equation, genius at play:/Hail and hosanna, strong mother God!" Some Methodists laugh.

•On October 13, thousands of homosexual activists marched on the Supreme Court in protest of its antibuggery ruling; and as many as 600 were removed by police wearing rubber gloves. Mr. Brian Willson, who lost his legs during a September protest in front of a train at the Concord, California Naval Weapons Station, returned to demonstrate against American policy in Central America propped up on a metal walker and wearing a hard hat. Mikhail Gorbachev agreed to meet with President Reagan in December, and a twenty-seven-year-old *frotteur* on a New York subway was so badly mauled by his victim that he called in the cops to prevent further mayhem. Mr. Robert Davidson so angered his victim that she began bashing his head against the pavement of the subway until the pitiable wretch called in the police for protective custody. The unidentified woman and Mr. Davidson filed charges against each other.

•In education news Miss Joyce Owens, a former DePaul University student accused of running a $150-an-hour call-girl ring from the school's Chicago campus, pled guilty to pandering charges. The New York City Board of Education is distributing rubber gloves to city schools to protect teachers from contracting AIDS while undertaking their propaedeutic duties, and the University of Vermont's student newspaper inserted 5,000 condoms in its October 1 issue. Assistant Dean of Students Miss Narbeth Emmanuel described the distribution as a "very positive" and "constructive" "educational thing," because AIDS is "serious" and "complex." There was a day when anyone on a college campus caught speaking such ghastly English would have been put to death. *—RET*

# CORRESPONDENCE

**The Kinsley Crack-Up**

Of course I ought to resist replying to your editor-in-chief's almost clinically self-revealing review of my book, *Curse of the Giant Muffins* (*TAS*, November 1987), but on one small matter you got my goat. I stand accused of being "an embarrassingly insecure self-promoter" because of my alleged "habit of repeatedly introducing persons in this book as 'my friend ____.'" I count four people identified as friends over 286 pages: Marty Peretz (my boss, in the acknowledgements), Mickey Kaus (a writer at *Newsweek*), Maureen Dowd (a reporter at the *New York Times*), and James Fallows (an editor at the *Atlantic*). Not to insult my friends, but it's a bit hard to be accused of social climbing based on this list. This example, by the way, illustrates the general honesty and fairness of the review.

*—Michael Kinsley*
*Washington, D.C.*

*R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. replies:*

And so Mr. Kinsley went back and counted how many times he used "my friend ____"—all to disprove my assertion that he is "an embarrassingly insecure self-promoter"? Mr. Kinsley's insecurity is more severe than my earlier diagnosis indicated.

**Home Away from Home**

Marin Strmecki's article, "The Stinger Finds a Home: Bill Casey's Bequest to Afghanistan" (*TAS*, November 1987), might just as accurately have been subtitled, "Bill Casey's bequest to the Ayatollah." Since the article came out, we have learned that Iran indeed has acquired Stingers from the Afghan guerrillas and is using them against U.S. forces.

This is a logical point to step back and ask what poses the greater threat to American security—Soviet intervention along their border with Afghanistan, or hundreds of billions in Persian Gulf oil revenue each year becoming available to Khomeini's Terrorist International?

If we offered to meet Soviet concerns about their Afghan border, they would be more inclined to meet our concerns about Iran. If we refuse to deal with them, however, they will have an irresistible provocation to keep Khomeini supplied until Congress forces an American surrender of the Gulf.

One should also note the extreme danger posed by our tacit support of Pakistan's hydrogen bomb project. Pakistan's President Zia ul-Haq is currently our friend (just as the Shah of Iran was), but how about his successor? And do we really want to set a precedent for Soviet sponsorship of nuclear weapons development in Cuba or Libya?

*—Hugo S. Cunningham*
*Omaha, Nebraska*

*Marin Strmecki replies:*

Mr. Cunningham's letter raises four points to which I would like to respond:

(1) It is not clear how Iran apparently acquired its stock of Stinger missiles. According to Afghan resistance leaders, Iranian forces captured an Afghan supply caravan near the Afghan-Iranian border and confiscated a few of these weapons. Iranian officials have claimed to have dozens of Stingers, which, if true, would indicate the existence of another source.

(2) U.S. military aircraft operating in the Persian Gulf are not at risk as a result of Iran's acquisition of the Stinger missiles. Every Stinger is equipped with an electronic IFF—or "identification friend or foe"—system to distinguish between friendly, i.e., Western, aircraft and others. As a result, it will not fire at American aircraft in the Gulf.

(3) Gorbachev and Company are unlikely to accommodate us in the Persian Gulf in exchange for a free hand over Afghanistan. Historically, the Soviets have shown an interest in dominating not one or the other but both. A victory in Afghanistan would simply facilitate a Soviet victory over all of southwest Asia.

(4) I fail to see why Pakistan's efforts to build an atomic—not hydrogen—bomb should be noted in an article about the Stinger missile in Afghanistan. In any case, I would observe that the U.S. has been actively opposing Islamabad's nuclear program, to the point that Pakistan now wonders about the reliability of American support.

**It's Crying Time Again**

David Brock's reply (Correspondence, *TAS*, October 1987) to my letter relied on an article by George Archibald in the April 17, 1987 *Washington Times*. In the article, among other calumnies, Mr. Archibald doctored the radio talk show transcript that Mr. Brock quoted from in his reply.

A Denver radio talk show moderator asked Rep. Schroeder whether she knew she was on the Nicaragua Network's advisory board. Rep. Schroeder replied: "No, I mean I never knew I was on that. I knew they had me on a fund-raising letter."

With the creative use of a bracketed clause, Mr. Archibald altered her answer: "'I never knew I was on that [the letter and the Nicaragua Network Advisory Board],' Mrs. Schroeder said March 20."

The *Washington Times* declined to print my letter correcting the Archibald article, thus leading to Mr. Brock's giving the doctored quote further circulation.

*—Daniel Buck*
*Administrative Assistant*
*Office of Patricia Schroeder*
*U.S. House of Representatives*
*Washington, D.C.*

*David Brock replies:*

Okay, let's let readers decide. This is what Rep. Schroeder said on Denver radio station KNUS, March 20, 1987, in reference to the Nicaragua network affair: "They put my name on a fund-raising letter. That all happened in '85. . . . I wrote them and told them to take the name off, you know. I feel very angry that they're using my name but what can you do? . . . My name was put on the fundraising thing by staff and when I found out about it, I wrote and told them to take it off. . . . If I was on the advisory board, I was never asked to be. . . . I never knew I was on that. I knew they had me on a fundraising letter. I wrote and told them to take it off." George Archibald, in the April 17, 1987 *Washington Times*, quoted Rep. Schroeder as saying: "My name was put on the fundraising thing by staff and when I found out about it, I wrote and told them to take it off. . . . I feel very angry that they're using my name but what can you do? . . . I never knew I was on the letter and the Nicaragua Network Advisory Board." This strikes me as a reasonable insertion: Rep. Schroeder did not know that her name had been put on Nicaragua Network fundraising material by her staff; and she did not know she had been put on the Nicaragua Network Advisory Board. Right?

**Come On, Tom**

As one of the editorial writers who resigned from the *Washington Times* with Bill Cheshire, I would like to correct Tom Bethell's erroneous report ("I'm Back," *TAS*, October 1987).

On April 14, the senior members of the editorial page witnessed events which left no doubt that the Unification Church was influencing the newspaper's editorial policy. As this was contrary to our agreed-upon arrangement, we resigned.

Though he is generally conscientious in this regard, Mr. Bethell failed to call the principals in this particular story. Instead, he confined himself to presenting the newspaper's version, which, I can testify, is untrue. To echo a high-ranking Timesman, I'd be willing to take a polygraph to prove the point.

Mr. Bethell also attributes mystical powers to Mr. Cheshire, holding that because he walked into the jobless wilderness, his staff naturally followed. Bill Cheshire is a fine man, but the Pied

*(continued on page 100)*

# EDITORIALS

## CHEERS!

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

These past twenty years have sped by faster than I would have thought. I was a college boy cheered by the stupidity around me and thrilled by the prospect of writing about it. Hesto presto, and I am in the vestibule of middle years surprised that the stupidity is still here; but still thrilled by the prospect of descanting upon it. Along the way, I have paused on occasion for an alcoholic libation. But I am a serious man. I do not drink to escape; I drink to see the world from the political opposition's point of view.

Twenty years ago it did not take so much booze. Today it takes whole jugs. Unfortunately, the opposition no longer sees the world with the expansive glow that comes with the evening's first julep. Nor does it see the world with the mellow benignity that follows upon a second or a third. The old hopefulness, the old expansiveness, both have vanished. Today, the opposition views the world through bleary eyes and with a heart full of that free-floating woe that is so familiar to the fellow who killed a case of beer the night before and sang until dawn.

Through seven years of tolerably competent government, prosperity, and peace, the Liberals of the New Age have felt like hell and assumed that everyone else did too, all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding. During most of these years they have wished for the worst in hopes that the worst would improve all mankind. Now with the stock market's wobbles they feel the stirrings of hope, but what is their hope? Perhaps they hope to replace Ronald Reagan with an American Farouk, say, Teddy Kennedy, or an American Mussolini, say, the Rev. Jesse Jackson. So there you are—that is what the political opposition of twenty years ago has come to.

It continues to be amusing to lampoon these unhappy people, though perhaps doing so has been somewhat imprudent. It turns out that they are not good sports. In the old days when they called us fascists and racists for exercising our democratic prerogatives and dissenting from their blah, we all thought they were merely being droll. More recently I have come to the judgment that they really meant it. They think that only a fascist or a racist would confute their historic claims that Marxist jailers are only agrarian reformers, that the economy can be run according to the same principles that governed the miracle of the loaves and the fishes, that cows properly educated and nourished can jump over the moon. As a matter of interpersonal relations it was probably a mistake to disagree with the Liberals on these matters, and it was a worse mistake to have on so many matters been proved right. They are not going to forgive us for that. They are going to alternate between abominating us and pretending that we are not here. Right now in all their cultural redoubts they seem to have adopted a kind of vague conservatism, but they are not allowing any conservatives in to monitor the proceedings.

Well, such is life. The fact is that this magazine has been right about the major issues of the past twenty years. In *Orthodoxy*, our anniversary anthology, which Harper & Row has just published, I noted that "wherever the New Age Liberals' foreign prescriptions have touched ground, the corpses have accumulated and rotted in the fields. Wherever their social panaceas have been perpetrated, pathologies multiply." History has recorded the debacle. All the New Age Liberals' grand hopes and visionary programs have either led to a handful of modest gains for mankind or to disasters, usually the latter. Now their only cause for hope is that conservatism ends in disaster too—some hope.

Through all these fleeting years *The American Spectator* has drawn strength from a broad range of writers: Americans and Europeans, conservatives, libertarians, social democrats, occasional Liberals, and from neoconservatives. This was the first intellectual review that as a matter of policy brought together the traditional conservatives and those liberals who would eventually be called neoconservatives. As a matter of policy it attempted to publish literate essays on politics while retrieving the urbanity and flamboyance of an earlier strain of American writing associated most frequently with Mencken and Nathan. And as a matter of policy it has defended liberty and excellence. These are things it will continue to do in the years ahead, for *The American Spectator* is meant to be a thoroughly American magazine, expansive and optimistic, appreciative of liberty, and curious about the good life. It is, then, the perfect prescription for the Liberal opposition's ailments. ☐

## WOODWARD UNVEILED

After sober reflection, I think we can all agree that there is something obsessive about a reporter who would inveigle his way into the hospital room of a terminally ill patient, hoping against all odds to wrest some momentous *corpus delicti* from the dying man. Most normal people would be afraid of the harm they might do, for instance, disrupting a life support system or bringing such alarm to the patient as to cause pain or even death. That so few Washington commentators have expressed repugnance at Bob Woodward's boast of having stolen into Central Intelligence Director William J. Casey's hospital room as the old man went through his last agonies testifies to the stunted moral sense of most of my colleagues.

Yet, return to Mr. Woodward. He tells us with no trace of shame that some time toward the end of last January, six or so weeks after a cancerous tumor was removed from Casey's brain and as word circulated through Washington that Casey was in a hell of a state, he conspired to enter the man's hospital room for one last interview. It is an improbable story. It is also a repellent story. Anyone who would claim it had to be obsessed. But Woodward was in the last stages of a massive book on Casey's role in alleged CIA skullduggery. At this stage in any literary project obsessions come easily. Compassionate readers will forgive Woodward his coarseness.

Moreover, Woodward had a terrible problem. With his usual mix of audacity and zealousness, he had expended years gathering up word of every secret operation undertaken during Casey's tenure. Then, just as he is about to hand his findings over to his publisher, Ed Meese pops up before the cameras and microphones and reveals an operation completely missed by Woodward's investigative prodigies: the diverson of profits from arms sales into the coffers of the contras. Before Meese's press conference there was never a word of the diversion in the *Washington Post*. Woodward simply did not have the story. Surely Woodward realized in those last days that he was handing his publisher a sausage of a book filled with factual stories and with some very dubious ones. Reviewers will duly reveal the clunkers in the months ahead. But were this book to have no reference to the fabulous diversions, it might sink from sight. Thus, to the bed of a dying man our intrepid reporter does go.

Or did he? He says that he did, but he offers no evidence. On the other hand, we know these facts. At Princeton University on September 29, Robert Gates, deputy director of Central Intelligence, confirmed "we had several security officers looking after Mr. Casey twenty-four hours a day every day that he was in the hospital. One of these officers stood by his door, and the other stood near his room with a view of the door and of adjacent hallways. Those are the facts." Yes, facts; and there are more. Mr. Casey's wife says that either she or her daughter were in Mr. Casey's room at all times, and that the room was close to the nurses' pool in easy view of the staff.

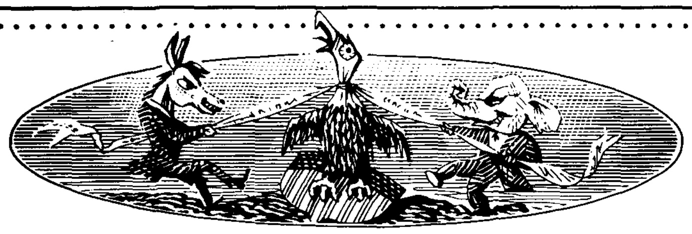
Woodward insists that he overcame all these barriers. But he does not tell us what the room was like or Casey's position in it. On "Nightline" Ted Koppel asked him. All Woodward would say was that to describe Casey's position would reveal the identity of his co-conspirator. Reflect on that. How helpless was Casey then? So how did the conversation go? Based on whatever account one reads, by late January Casey was speaking with enormous difficulty, if at all. I personally know that his speech by then was more often a pathetic gurgling than diction. He was indeed in a hell of a mess. Yet according to Woodward's book there was a rather lively conversation, Casey asking how the book was going, Casey pondering the immensities of life or something—Woodward's rendering is unclear.

But lucidity suddenly reappears when Woodward delivers the one crucial question that has goaded him to this final ghoulish act. What is that question? At the time, Washington's current wisdom had it that Casey knew the details of the diversion. Washington's burning question was did the President know. Woodward asks the first question. Why did the city's boldest investigative reporter not ask if the President knew? Too hot a question to embellish? And what does one make of his next question? The man who has studied this lifelong anti-Communist for years asks him why he aided the contras. "I believed . . . I believed," is the ghostly reply, then sleep comes to the Director.

Now this is bad fiction. Yet despite all these improbabilities, Bob Wood-

*(continued on page 106)*

# CAPITOL IDEAS



## I HATE TO SPOIL THE PARTY

by Tom Bethell

In a way it's remarkable how little things have changed in the last twenty years. Walk down Haight Street in San Francisco and you sense that 1967 lingers on: not so much that it might come back as that it never really left, and that the forces that created it have in many respects gathered strength.

They say we live in a conservative age. This is very far from being the case. Witness the astounding disparity of activism engendered by the Supreme Court nomination of Judge Robert H. Bork. I would estimate that 100 people actively opposed Bork for every one person who actively supported him. Left and right are not so much two camps as a sizable army on the one hand and a few scattered individuals on the other. True, most people (if they knew there was a war on) would side with the conservatives, because most people are basically content with the world as it is. They would rightly worry about the left's program to transform it into a "new society." Unfortunately, however, most people do not know what is going on.

All the evidence suggests that the great liberal age of apostasy and rebellion against natural law, unleashed at the time of the French Revolution, not only is still with us but is still gaining strength. What has happened since 1967? American collapse and Communist triumph in East Asia. Communism comes to Central America. The American response is negotiation: Perhaps the Communists can be talked into yielding up their own sources of power. There has been a considerable breakdown of religious (specifically Christian) faith and practice; followed by the sexual revolution; by feminism; and by abortion. Now we have homosexual shamelessness and claims to victim status. Lest we deceive ourselves, this has not been a conservative era.

The present world situation is obviously not stable. Another twenty years will undoubtedly see large and clarifying changes—whether for the better or worse it is hard to say; but in the short run most likely for the worse. Large numbers of educated people in the West are now extraordinarily disaffected from their own societies and regard patriotism, fidelity, and loyalty as outmoded virtues—either irrelevant or downright undesirable. They hunger for a "new society," one that does not now exist anywhere in the world, never has existed, and which they are unable to specify or describe except in the most general terms.

"The great secular religion of socialism emerged in Europe in response to a growing religious void at the heart of Western civilization," the English writer Christopher Booker said recently. Today there may indeed be a growing realization that socialism does not work at the material level, but then the provision of material goods never was the real goal of socialism. "The Communist regimes are still in power," Booker continued, "entrenched in privilege, punch drunk with the most insane collective flight from reality in history. Above all, perhaps, the spiritual void which gave rise to socialism in the first place still lies at the heart of our entire materialistic civilization."

What follows is a 1987 time-capsule—a report on a bookshop called Common Concerns, on Connecticut Avenue, N.W., just south of Dupont Circle in Washington, D.C. Anyone who believes that we live in a conservative age should visit this fascinating store. It has been in business for seven years, owned by a gentleman called David Marcuse (no relation to Herbert). By the door are packets of Uhuru tea, grown in collective farms in Tanzania and Mozambique and blended into a comforting socialist brew. There are also "just blend" packets of coffee from collectives in Angola, Nicaragua, and Mozambique—a cash crop you don't have to feel guilty about.

Elsewhere there are Anti-Monopoly board games, records of tribal drumming, Soviet jazz, and Pete Seeger, anti-racist, non-sexist childrens' books ("Hello, Amigos," "Meet Dr. Martin Luther King," "My Mom Travels a Lot," "Just Us Women"), copies of *Dragon's Teeth* ("the anti-racist children's book magazine"), and a rack of left-wing comic books (*Commies from Mars, The People's Comics, Dopin' Dan, Wimmen's Comix, Class War Comix*).

But it was the magazine racks that caught my attention. I have suggested that the lobbying disparity in the case of Judge Bork may have been 100 to one against. I believe that a similar ratio exists between magazines of the left and the right.

Have a cup of collectivist tea from Tanzania and browse with me among the mags. Has Nyerere's brew put you in the mood for a little African reading? Then choose between: *African Concord, Africa Report, Africa Events, Africa News, TransAfrica Forum, West Africa,* the *African Guardian, New African, African Business, Afkar Inquiry,* and *Journal of African Marxists.*

Moving on to Central America, *South* sees Nicaragua as "Battered But Not Beaten." *Voices of Mexico* worries about "The War on the Welfare State." *Nacla: Report on the Americas* described "Death Squads in Los Angeles." *Compañero*, "the international magazine of Guatemala's Guerrilla Army of the Poor," chronicled "The Bloody Rise to Power of the Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie," and (more optimistically) discerned "The Fighting Fist of the Masses."

*Central Americas Writers Bulletin* is a "project of the Central American Resource Center," while *Central America Report* had a cover story on a favorite subject: "Favored Few: The Rich in Guatemala." *Chile Newsletter* advocated "Pulling Props from Pinochet." *Nicaraguan Perspectives* saw the "Human Cost of U.S.-Sponsored Terrorism," and threw in for good measure a "special section" on "Nicaraguan Women." (But for once it had nothing on Nicaraguan poets, of whom there is one in every pro-Sandinista household.)

The *Third World Book Review* gave space to "Writers and Artists Against Apartheid." (Writers who supported apartheid would of course be rather more newsworthy because so hard to find.) The *Guardian* ("independent radical weekly") discerned "Apartheid's Children Battered by State." The *Anti-Apartheid News* had a redundant air,

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*Tom Bethell is* The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

noting sadly that "Botha Opts for Self Destruction." *Frontline*, on "the frontline of the struggle against war and fascism," recorded with calm triumph: "Missile Pact, Third Summit, Signal Changing U.S.-Soviet Relations." *Mother Jones* wondered of Jesse Jackson: "What Does He Really Want?" *Unity*, standing for "peace, justice, equality and socialism," less skeptically encouraged the reverend to "Run, Jesse, Run." (It also cautioned that, despite the end of the union boycott of Coors, "progressives still won't drink Coors.")

*Greenpeace* recalled "A Forgotten War: The Assault on Central America's Environment," while the *Ecologist* wondered (with a note of realism), "Can We Trust the World Bank?" *Synthesis*, a journal for those interested in social ecology, bioregionalism, ecofeminism, and the Green movement, reported on a widely neglected "Fourth World Assembly in San Francisco." *Environmental Action* discussed "Nukegate," with particular reference to "private greed." *Nuclear Times* wondered whether the INF treaty really was a good idea—Reagan and the peace movement weren't normally in bed together, after all.

*Science for the People* was concerned about "Technology and Women's Health," the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* concentrated on "How Reagan Was Sold Star Wars." *In These Times* deplored "The Fouling of the Atlantic." *Radical Teacher* discussed "Education in Yugoslavia," and "Feminists at the Bargaining Table." *Resurgence*, "a magazine and a movement" offering "hope for a better future," had a cover story entitled "Long Live the Weeds." *Processed World*, an anti-technology journal out of San Francisco, carried much the same message. *Animals' Agenda*, the "animals' rights magazine," documented "Road Kills: 400 Million a Year."

*Israeli World Affairs*, "an independent monthly research report on Israel's diplomatic and military activities worldwide," exposed "Israel's Men in Guatemala." *East Wind*, about the "politics and culture of Asians in the U.S.," discerned those politics to be leftist, deploring, for example, the English-only movement, as threatening to "eliminate the rights of minority groups."

Time now for a look at the women's magazines. But first let us break for a cup of Sandino-Luanda-Chissano coffee. Thus refreshed, we find more than enough reading material to keep the most single-minded feminist busy: *Outwrite, New Directions for Women, Spare Rib, Women of Power, Links, Hurricane Alice* (a "feminist review," which wonders, oddly, "Why Do White Women Have Vaginas?"), *Southern Feminist, Connexions, Women and Revolution* ("Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League"), which unconditionally demands: "Free America's Class War Prisoners!" *Women's World*, connected to Isis-Wicce, "an action-oriented resource center" (something to do with witches, I wonder?), had an article entitled "Lest We Forget the Women of Bhopal." (As though we could.)

*Southern Feminist* had an interview with our old favorite Sonia Johnson, now all too infrequently in the news. Sonia was discussing her new book *Going Out of Our Minds: The Metaphysics of Liberation*. I confess I nearly bought this issue. There were many more women's magazines and I shall list them hurriedly as I know you must be moving on to other reading matter in this anniversary issue: *Helicon Nine, Third Women, Women Artist News, Changing Men, WomaNews, Immigrant Women, Sage Woman, Knowing Woman*, the *New Republic, Feminist Review, Media Report to Women, Off Our Backs, Sojourner, On the Issues, Women and Environments, WIN News.*

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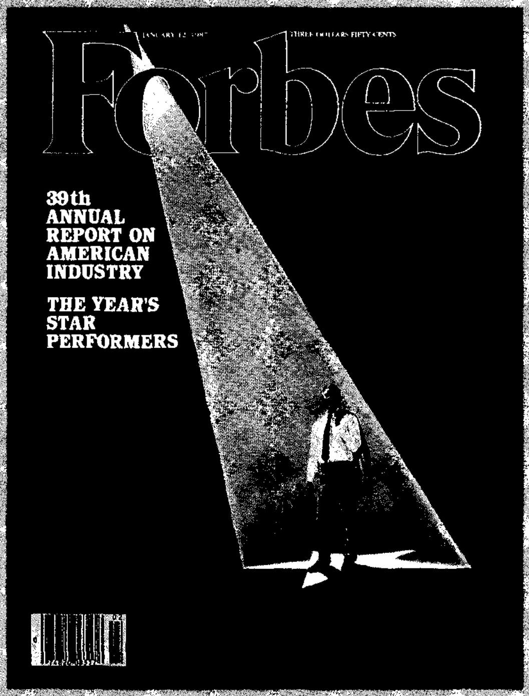
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(Here a pause for breath and a cuppa Ujaama.)

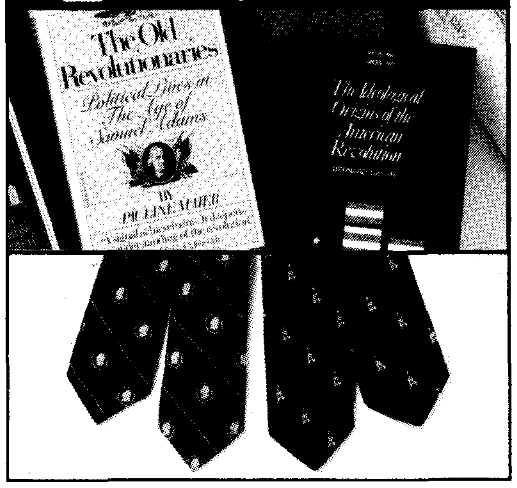
Let's see now, we're barely half way through the progressive's monthly reading. Don't miss *Internationalist Perspective*, published by the "external fraction of the International Communist Current." Lead story: "Yes, Struggle Outside the Unions is Possible." *Radical Philosophy* is too tedious to summarize. *Sojourners* described "Jesus' Second Campaign of Nonviolent Direct Action." *Covert Action Information Bulletin* wondered about the "origin and spread of AIDS: Is the West Responsible?" (Footnoted references in this journal to yet more unsuspected caches of leftist publications suggest that I may be only scratching the surface here. What of the *Big Apple Dyke News*, for example, or the *Haiti Progress*?)

*New Internationalist* ("A magazine with a purpose we can all applaud and must support"—J. K. Galbraith) saw a "Sandino Sunrise" in one issue, "Birth of a New Man" in another. Rushing on, I barely have space to mention: *Marxism Today, Searchlight* ("the Anti-Fascist Monthly"), *Radical America, Socialist Politics, Our Times, New Options, Socialist Review, Peace Courier* (sees a "Hot Autumn"), *GATT-Fly* (addressing "global issues of economic justice"), and *Intervention.*

Likewise I can give only a fleeting glance to: *International Correspondence* ("Union Women Launch a Political Challenge"), the *North Star* ("The Infinite Horizon: Feminism and Sexuality in the New Nicaragua"), *Shmate* ("Journal of Progressive Jewish Thought"), *Tikkun, Southern Changes,* the *Texas Observer, International Labour Reports,* the *Neighborhood Works* (worries about "Incinerator Ash Laden with Toxic Metals"), *Changing Work, Talkin' Union* ("Gene Debs Remembered"), *Against the Current* ("Won't Let Death Squads Turn Us Around"), *Peace and Freedom, Spartacist* ("Honor Bolshevik Leaders!" "Gore Vidal: Bad Boy of the Bourgeoisie"), *Internationalism* ("publication of the International Communist Current in the U.S."), *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism, Peace Letter, Peace in Action,* and *A World to Win,* the latter "inspired by the formation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, announced on March 12, 1984, which has regrouped many Marxist-Leninist parties from around the world," its pages open to all "on the same side of the barricades in the fight against imperialism and reaction."

Let us also take note of: *Propaganda Analysis Review, No KKK, No Fascist USA!* ("Howard Beach, Have You Heard, This is Not Johannesburg!"), *Worker's Democracy, Open Road,* the *Catholic Worker, News and Letters, World War Three Illustrated, Dissent, Monthly Review, Socialist Review, New Left Review, New International, Social Anarchism, Socialism and Democracy, Across Frontiers,* and the *World Today. Détente,* "devoted to understanding the Soviet Union," interviews a "top official in the Party's Central Committee" who "reaffirms his conviction that the future belongs to socialism." The *Workbook,* a "sponsor" of whom is Thomas N. Bethell (not me, folks), is a "tool for all the people who, in their various ways, are working to provide a world characterized by economic justice, clean air and water and uncontaminated soil; abundant, safe, minimally polluting energy supplies; rapid, safe, convenient transportation," etc., its staff members believing that "racism, sexism, poverty, crime and environmental destruction are all parts of the same problem."

You say the readers of these publications are not typical of America nor a majority within it? Yes, but who opposes them? Let's see now, there's *National Review, Commentary, Encounter,* the *Public Interest, Human Events* . . . ummmm . . . And don't forget, folks, we're the ones who are called ideologues, in this conservative era. ☐



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THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR VOL. 20, NO. 12 / DECEMBER 1987

Tom Wolfe

# THE GREAT RELEARNING

The twentieth century is over.

In 1968, in San Francisco, I came across a curious footnote to the psychedelic movement. At the Haight-Ashbury Free Clinic there were doctors who were treating diseases no living doctor had ever encountered before, diseases that had disappeared so long ago they had never even picked up Latin names, diseases such as the mange, the grunge, the itch, the twitch, the thrush, the scroff, the rot. And how was it that they had now returned? It had to do with the fact that thousands of young men and women had migrated to San Francisco to live communally in what I think history will record as one of the most extraordinary religious experiments of all time.

The hippies, as they became known, sought nothing less than to sweep aside all codes and restraints of the past and start out from zero. At one point Ken Kesey organized a pilgrimage to Stonehenge with the idea of returning to Anglo-Saxon civilization's point zero, which he figured was Stonehenge, and heading out all over again to do it better. Among the codes and restraints that people in the communes swept aside—quite purposely—were those that said you shouldn't use other people's toothbrushes or sleep on other people's mattresses without changing the sheets or, as was more likely, without using any sheets at all or that you and five other people shouldn't drink from the same bottle of Shasta or take *tokes* from the same cigarette. And now, in 1968, they were relearning . . . the laws of hygiene . . . by getting the mange, the grunge, the itch, the twitch, the thrush, the scroff, the rot.

This process, namely the relearning—following a Promethean and unprecedented start from zero—seems to me to be the *leitmotif* of our current interlude, here in the dying years of the twentieth century.

"Start from zero" was the slogan of the Bauhaus School. The story of how the Bauhaus, a tiny artists' movement in Germany in the 1920s, swept aside the architectural styles of the past and created the glass-box face of the modern American city is a familiar one, and I won't retell it. But I should mention the soaring spiritual exuberance with which the movement began, the passionate conviction of the Bauhaus's leader, Walter Gropius, that by starting from zero in architecture and design man could free himself from the dead hand of the past. By the late 1970s, however, architects themselves were beginning to complain of the dead hand of the Bauhaus: the flat roofs, which leaked from rain and collapsed from snow, the tiny bare beige office cubicles, which made workers feel like component parts, the glass walls, which let in too much heat, too much cold, too much glare, and no air at all. The relearning is now underway in earnest. The architects are busy rummaging about in what the artist Richard Merkin calls the Big Closet. Inside the Big Closet, in promiscuous heaps, are the abandoned styles of the past. The current favorite rediscoveries: Classical, Secession, and Moderne (Art Deco). Relearning on the wing, the architects are off on a binge of eclecticism comparable to the Victorian period's a century ago.

In politics the twentieth century's great start from zero was one-party socialism, also known as Communism or Marxism-Leninism. Given that system's bad reputation in the West today (even among the French intelligentsia), it is instructive to read John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World*—before turning to Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*. The old strike hall poster of a Promethean worker in a blue shirt breaking his chains across his mighty chest was in truth the vision of ultimate human freedom the movement believed in at the outset. For intellectuals in the West the painful dawn began with the publication of the *Gulag Archipelago* in 1973. Solzhenitsyn insisted that the villain behind the Soviet concentration-camp network was not Stalin or Lenin (who invented the term concentration camp) or even Marxism. It was instead the Soviets' peculiarly twentieth-century notion that they could sweep aside not only the old social order but also its religious ethic, which had been millennia in the making ("common decency," Orwell called it) and reinvent morality . . . here . . . now . . . "at the point of a gun," in the famous phrase of the Maoists. Today the relearning has reached the point where even ruling circles in the Soviet Union and China have begun to wonder how best to convert Communism into something other than, in Susan Sontag's phrase, Successful Fascism.

The great American contribution to the twentieth century's start from zero was in the area of manners and mores, especially in what was rather primly called "the sexual revolution." In every hamlet, even in the erstwhile Bible Belt, may be found the village brothel, no longer hidden in a house of blue lights

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*Tom Wolfe is author of* The Right Stuff, From Bauhaus to Our House, *and, most recently,* The Bonfire of the Vanities *(Farrar Straus Giroux).*

or red lights or behind a green door but openly advertised by the side of the road with a thousand-watt back-lit plastic sign: TOTALLY ALL-NUDE GIRL SAUNA MASSAGE AND MARATHON ENCOUNTER SESSIONS INSIDE. Up until two years ago pornographic movie theaters were as ubiquitous as the Seven-Eleven, including outdoor drive-ins with screens six, seven, eight storeys high, the better to beam all the moistened folds and glistening nodes and stiffened giblets to a panting American countryside. Two years ago the pornographic theater began to be replaced by the pornographic videocassette, which could be brought into any home. Up on the shelf in the den, next to the set of *The Encyclopedia Brittanica* and the great books, one now finds the cassettes: *Shanks Akimbo*, *That Thing with the Cup*. My favorite moment in Jessica Hahn's triumphal tour of Medialand this fall came when a ten-year-old girl, a student at a private school, wearing a buttercup blouse, a cardigan sweater, and her school uniform skirt, approached her outside a television studio with a stack of *Playboy* magazines featuring the famous Hahn nude form and asked her to autograph them. With the school's blessing, she intended to take the signed copies back to the campus and hold a public auction. The proceeds would go to the poor.

But in the sexual revolution, too, the painful dawn has already arrived, and the relearning is imminent. All may be summed up in a single term, requiring no amplification: AIDS.

The Great Relearning—if anything so prosaic as remedial education can be called great—should be thought of not as the end of the twentieth century but the prelude to the twenty-first. There is no law of history that says a new century must start ten or twenty years beforehand, but two times in a row it has worked out that way. The nineteenth century began with the American and French revolutions of the late eighteenth. The twentieth century began with the formulation of Marxism, Freudianism, and Modernism in the late nineteenth. And now the twenty-first begins with the Great Relearning.

The twenty-first century, I predict, will confound the twentieth-century notion of the Future as something exciting, novel, unexpected, or radiant; as Progress, to use an old word. It is already clear that the large cities, thanks to the Relearning, will not even look new. Quite the opposite; the cities of 2007 will look more like the cities of 1927 than the cities of 1987. The twenty-first century will have a retrograde look and a retrograde mental atmosphere. People of the next century, snug in their Neo-Georgian apartment complexes, will gaze back with a ghastly awe upon our time. They will regard the twentieth as the century in which wars became so enormous they were known as World Wars, the century in which technology leapt forward so rapidly man developed the capacity to destroy the planet itself—but also the capacity to escape to the stars on space ships if it blew. But above all they will look back upon the twentieth as the century in which their forebears had the amazing confidence, the Promethean *hubris*, to defy the gods and try to push man's power and freedom to limitless, god-like extremes. They will look back in awe . . . without the slightest temptation to emulate the daring of those who swept aside all rules and tried to start from zero. Instead, they will sink ever deeper into their Neo-Louis bergeres, content to live in what will be known as the Somnolent Century or the Twentieth Century's Hangover. ☐

The non-issue in Alaska

Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) has in recent months been much shrouded in controversy. Much of this controversy has centered on whether a relatively small portion of these lands—1.5 million acres along the Beaufort Sea Coastal Plain, out of a total of 19 million acres—should be opened to oil exploration.

One of the latest salvos fired by the anti-development forces came in the form of a letter to an influential newspaper by a spokesman for an environmental group. The letter makes a couple of statements worthy of examination.

First, the writer states that there is "only a 19 percent chance of finding any oil at all in the Arctic refuge." But even at those odds—and taking risks is what the oil business is all about—the coastal plain represents the best hope for a major onshore oil strike in the United States. In fact, within the context of risks the oil industry usually faces in wildcat areas, those odds are actually rather attractive. The coastal plain site is less than 100 miles from the Prudhoe Bay field. If oil is found in the plain, according to Interior Department data, it could represent between 600 million and 9.2 billion barrels. The point is, we'll never know unless we drill.

The letter also argues that if oil is discovered in the Arctic refuge, "we will not be able to extract all of that oil, given current technology." That's got to be the silliest anti-development argument ever raised; all the oil in any field is never fully recovered. Drilling would never occur anywhere if it became conditional on whether 100 percent of the oil could be produced. Moreover, the Interior Department's coastal plain estimates are for recoverable oil. And constant improvements are being made in secondary and tertiary recovery methods; fields are yielding more and more of the oil as technology advances.

Dubious quibbles aside, the basic argument for development remains cogent, simple, and pressing. Any oil found in the coastal plain, or anywhere else in the U.S., would be more than welcome. Oil imports are rising and domestic production is falling. Prudhoe Bay itself, the largest field in the U.S. at 10 billion barrels, has been producing for 10 years. It is currently producing at a peak rate of about 1.5 million barrels a day—about a fifth of U.S. production—but will soon enter its inevitable period of decline. The real issue in Alaska is whether or not America should maximize its economic domestic oil and gas production to reduce the nation's dependence on foreign oil and its negative balance of payments—and do so in an environmentally acceptable manner.

What about the environment? Would it truly be despoiled, as the environmentalists state, if drilling were to take place?

A major issue environmentalists raise concerns Alaskan wildlife. Of all the animal species in the area, Secretary Hodel cited the caribou as the most likely to be affected. But Senator Frank H. Murkowski of Alaska has pointed out that the caribou herd has, in fact, quadrupled at Prudhoe Bay during the oil development years, and since construction of the Alaskan pipeline. Indeed, the caribou herd thrives in the area of the pipeline, in spite of dire warnings to the contrary.

Still, the acreage under discussion does include the calving grounds. Can the caribou adapt? Senator Murkowski has discussed the issue with a university scientist who has been working with caribou herds for many years. His conclusion, according to the Senator: If oil development were to occur near their usual calving grounds, the caribou would simply move a mile or so away.

The controversy over the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge fills us with feelings of déjà vu. The same anti-development arguments were raised in the '60s and '70s, first over drilling at Prudhoe Bay, and later over the construction of the pipeline. We had hoped these questions were settled once and for all; to raise them now is really to raise non-issues.

The energy and economic future of the nation are too important to be sidetracked by non-issues. Oil exploration in Alaska should proceed because the national interest requires it. The arguments against development, when considered against the nation's needs, seem to fall under the weight of both past experience and expert scrutiny.

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George Gilder

# THE MESSAGE OF THE MICROCOSM

A computerized world economy does not care about budget deficits or trade imbalances or national borders.

"Listen to the technology," urges Carver Mead of the California Institute of Technology, "find out what it is telling you."

It is a difficult counsel. The technology of today is entwined in science and speaks in tongues. Within the pentecostal chorus, minor prophets prate of nuclear winter and acid rain, viral plagues and carcinogenic plastics; *Scientific American*, transcending mere science, discovers the United States as a fount of worldwide hunger and poverty; more than half the physicists at Harvard, Columbia, Cornell, Berkeley, Dartmouth, and Stanford, among other centers of enlightenment, have pledged to boycott all efforts to thwart enemy missile attacks on their country; and Lester Thurow, the leading economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, delphically affirms "The Great Depression of 1990" as foretold in the cycle theory of an Indian mystic.

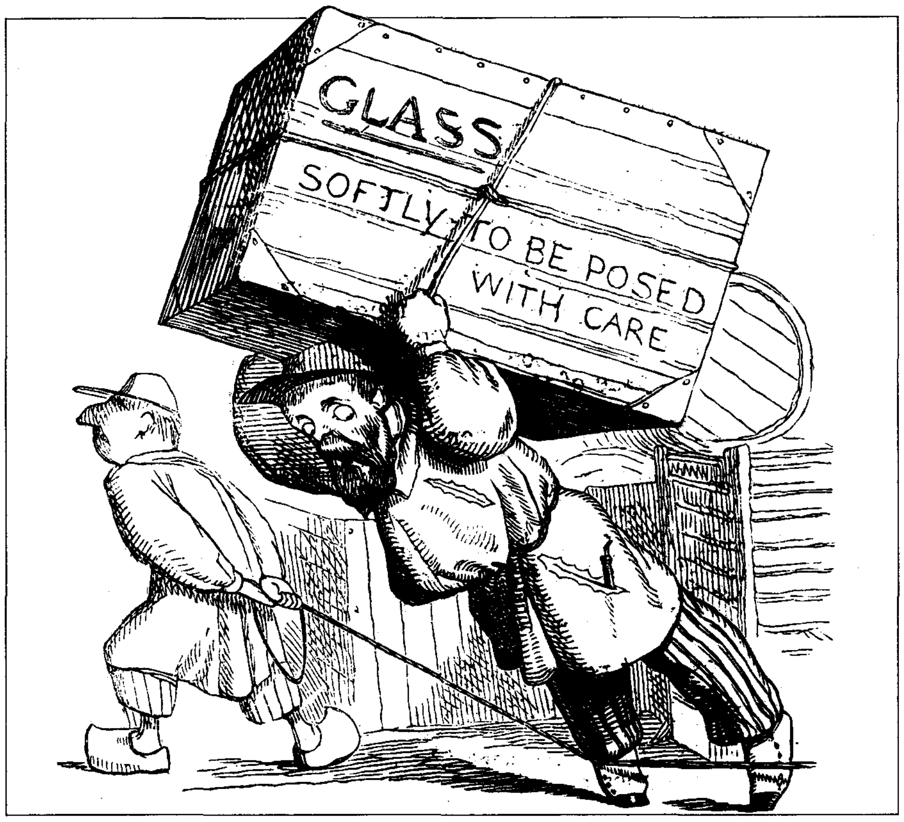
The experts seem to know a lot about the big bang and the spin on the Strange Quark, but not much about the cough in the carburetor or cause of the baby's headache, or about the differences between men and women, or whether the world is getting warmer or colder, or both. A few months ago astrophysicists discovered, "in nearby galaxies," black holes many times larger than the sun. These huge maws, unaccountably missed until now, might seem to symbolize the current state of scientific knowledge. Meanwhile the computer is down and the programmer is out to lunch with a Sandinista. That amid such disheartening confusions many researchers claim to have fathomed the origins of the universe and the death of God, bespeaks an awesome faith indeed.

It is understandable that many of us relegate it all to a black box, or a pastel panel, and continue to describe events in the old lore and languages, emblazoned with the old headlines. Listen to the technology? It is simpler to listen to the evening news, to watch the old world still reassuringly on stage, full of sound and fury, puffed up with mythic power and menace.

"YANK TROOPS MOVE UP SIX MILES," the New York *Herald Tribune* blared in my youth, and I could understand the message: the gridiron vision of Korea as territory at stake. Now the troops move on murkier grids, but no one doubts the underlying metaphor of territorial contest. Angola, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Iran, South Africa are the new arenas for capture the flag and they can be made to fit in the old dramaturgy.

"YANK SCIENTISTS SHRINK MEMORY CELL TO SIX MICRONS"—putting thousands of switches on a spot of silicon no wider than the wing of a flea—seems a less gripping and relevant drama. There is a vague awareness of the possibility of new and more portable gadgets, a vague fear of a threat to existing jobs and industries, a vague sense of both danger and promise. But few people comprehend that the microcosm of modern electronics is transvaluing all the things of the world, transforming all the landmarks, vitiating most of the academic disciplines. Protected by ignorance and nostalgia, the media and the politicians continue measuring miles in Namibia rather than microns in matter as the crux to the future of the globe.

Economics, sociology, geopolitics, art, religion all provide powerful tools that have sufficed for centuries to explain the essential surfaces of life. To many observers, there seems nothing truly new under the sun—no need for a deep understanding of man's new tools—no requirement to descend into the microcosm of modern electronics in order to comprehend the world. The world is all too much with us.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Nonetheless, studying economics and other social sciences, I began to realize that the old disciplines were breaking down, the familiar categories slipping away. An onslaught of technological progress was reducing much of economic and social theory to gibberish. For example, such concepts as land, labor, and capital, nation and society—solemnly discussed in every academic institution as if nothing had changed—have radically different meanings than before and drastically different values. Yet the vendors of old expertise continue on as if nothing had happened.

Laws get passed, editorials written, speeches delivered, soldiers dispatched, for all the world as if we still traveled in clipper ships and communicated chiefly by mail.

Jeane Kirkpatrick, for example, gave a speech, quoted respectfully in the *Wall Street Journal*, in which she said it was impossible to understand what is going on in the world without a comprehension of geography, "an idea of where things are." It is a common notion. It leads to such statements, portentously delivered, as: "Cuba is 90 miles south of Florida; the Middle East is a strategic hub; the Cape of Good Hope is a geopolitical choke point." Visit the Pentagon, or the *New York Times*, and everywhere there are maps, solemnly defining national borders and sovereign territories. No one shows any signs of knowing that we no longer live in geographic time and space, that the maps of nations are fully as obsolete as the charts of a flat earth, that geography tells us virtually nothing of interest about where things are in the real world.

The worldwide network of satellites and fiber optic cables, linked to digital computers, television terminals, telephones and databases, sustain worldwide markets for information, currency and capital on line 24 hours a day. Boeing 747s constantly traversing the oceans foster a global community of

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*George Gilder is the author of* Wealth and Poverty *and* The Spirit of Enterprise.

commerce. The silicon in sand and glass forms a global ganglion of electronic and photonic media that leaves all history in its wake. With other new technologies of materials science, bioengineering, robotics, and superconductivity, all also heavily dependent on the microchip, informations systems are radically reducing the significance of so-called raw materials and natural endowments, nations and ethnic loyalties, material totems and localities.

Israel, a desert-bound society, uses microelectronic agricultural systems to supply eighty percent of the cut flowers in Europe and compete in avocado markets in New York. Japan, a set of barren islands, has used microelectronic devices to become one of the globe's two most important nations. In an age when men can inscribe worlds on grains of sand, conventional territory no longer matters.

Even oil, once the exception to prove the rule, is succumbing to the microcosm. Part of a global market beset increasingly with substitutes, oil is rapidly losing its political sway. As the world confronts the promise of superconductors, photovoltaics, and other energy converters that will eventually increase fuel efficiency by compounded factors of ten and more, all the old geopolitical verities surrounding the production of energy are collapsing like Oklahoma banks.

Yet newspapers solemnly report events in places like Zaire and Lebanon as if they were of significance. Reporters transferred from Connecticut to Angola, or from California to China, imagine that they are being promoted. But in its impact on the world and its future all Angola put together is not worth one industrial park in Waltham, Massachusetts, and a billion slaves in China are less significant than a thousand students at Caltech.

Consider the apparently undeniable statement that Cuba is an island ninety miles south of Florida. It is false. Everything important about Cuba—Cuban culture, enterprise, cuisine, entertainment, people—is already in Florida and other parts of the United States. The total income of Cubans in America is already about four times the GNP of the island in the Caribbean, which subsists on billion-dollar subventions from the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union in turn subsists on Western technologies and the residual values of old world resources, combined with the rewards of gouging and grinding down the Russian people.

Or contemplate the widely accepted notion that the United States lost the war in Vietnam. It is true that there are no longer any American troops in Saigon. But the United States won the only valuable remaining resource of Indochina: the boat people. All the land and slaves they left behind are next to worthless. The Vietnamese in America are already incomparably more productive than the Vietnamese in Southeast Asia and the gap will increase steadily over the next twenty years. In the modern world, productive immigrants are not a burden; they are the way you keep score; the way you win a cold war. Until the new immigration law of 1986 the U.S. was massively winning the cold war by capturing its refugees and dominating its technologies.

**Such concepts as land, labor, and capital, nation and society—solemnly discussed in every academic institution as if nothing had changed—have radically different meanings than before and drastically different values.**

Or consider the language of economics. Everywhere politicians and economists are talking about trade balances. But in the modern era, the numbers are nearly irrelevant. Goods are nearly the least important entity in international exchange. The idea of balanced trade originated in the era when trade was dominated by resources, often peculiar to a specific territory. If you got in debt, there was nothing to do but to pay in kind, usually by shipping another resource, bullion, in clipper ships across treacherous seas. The exchange of capital was no more efficient than the exchange of goods. But today trade in goods is inhibited by culture, protectionism, and transport costs while capital markets are globally on line 24 hours a day. With 70 trillion dollar worldwide capital markets operating in real time, there is no longer any more reason for a balance of trade between the United States and Japan than between any two American states.

The change is directly analogous to the shift from primitive barter economies to money economies. It is no longer necessary to take physical possession of goods exchanged. Money has become global and microcosmic. As Walter Wriston has written, we are on a world information standard. Yet economists and politicians everywhere speak as if nothing has happened; money is still national, trade must balance, nations must barter.

Counting widgets at the border, economists compare the U.S. with Latin America as a net debtor to the world rather than as the source of most of the world's wealth and technology. They speak of protecting America from Japanese electronics companies which provide indispensable components to America's world-leading computer firms. They speak of protecting "U.S. technology" from foreigners, as if much of it was not created by immigrants and foreigners and as if most security leaks have not come from Americans. They speak of the U.S. losing its "independence" and sovereignty, its control over its destiny, as if economies still were separate entities, as if countries were autonomous, as if the new net of global enterprise had never been created. But nations are not separate, and short of a worldwide retreat to a pre-electronic age, trade will never balance again. The U.S., like all other countries, will again be "independent" only if it is willing to be poor.

Today the most important products are essentially made of the sand in chips of crystalline silicon. Their worth derives from the ideas they embody. They are information technologies and their value is invisible. Yet intellectuals, supposedly masters of ideas, refuse to believe in any value they cannot see or weigh. The some 10,000 professed Marxists on American faculties and many thousands more fellow travelers cling to materialist superstitions like so many pygmies worshipping trees. They count widgets and bemoan debts without the slightest notion of their meaning or promise.

In a recent debate on American competitiveness, I held up a book called *Manufacturing Matters* that makes a powerful case for manufacturing as the crucial source of economic power in the modern world. But what could be less significant, I asked, than where this book was manufactured? Did anyone care? Did the author even know? The manufacture of the book cost about $2.00. It sold for about $20. Ninety percent of its value derived from the contributions of the writers, the editors, the publishers, the distributors, the retailers, all of whom were American. Most of the purchasers were American and they captured the value of the ideas in the book, the consumer's surplus it imparted. To focus on the creator of the material embodiment rather than on the intellectual content was a new superstition. It reflected the familiar materialist fallacy—a totemistic preoccupation with things in a world where value chiefly resides in thoughts.

A book is a typical example of information technology. I could have held up a videocassette or a compact audio disk or a software package on a floppy disk. Like the book, all cost some two dollars or less to manufacture. But depending on the ideas inscribed on them, they sell for between ten and several hundred times their cost. If the cassette contains *Top Gun*, a video store can earn hundreds of dollars renting it out; if the floppy contains Lotus 1-2-3, it can be sold for $395; if it bears the kernel of a specialized operating system for a new supercomputer, it may sell for millions.

People in the industry readily accept the notion that the value of a floppy disk resides in the program on it. That's software, they say. But they assume hardware depends on rare materials and manufacturing skills.

As leading inventor Raymond Kurzweil has observed, these facts of information technology apply well beyond the domain of media for software storage. Hardware, too, is a similar information product. At the heart of any computer or telecommunications console or design system are a few crucial microchips. In volume, each of them also costs a couple of dollars to manufacture. Depending on the quality of the design, they will sell for between $10 and several thousand dollars. For example, Intel's new 386 microprocessor, the central processing unit for the new generation of IBM personal computers, sells for some $395 apiece. But even the computer's printed circuit boards and plastic chassis were products of computer aided design and manufacturing software which created their value.

Like the contents of a book, the code on a floppy, or the signals on a compact disk, the design of a microprocessor—or a computer—is a digital program. It may be rendered on a pattern generator tape or it can be dispatched down fiber optic cables in microseconds, bounced off satellites around the globe, and captured by a workstation anywhere in the world. Where it is made is much less significant than where it is conceived, and where it is either made or conceived is less significant than where it is used. What is absolutely clear is that the least significant thing about such products is the material resources they embody.

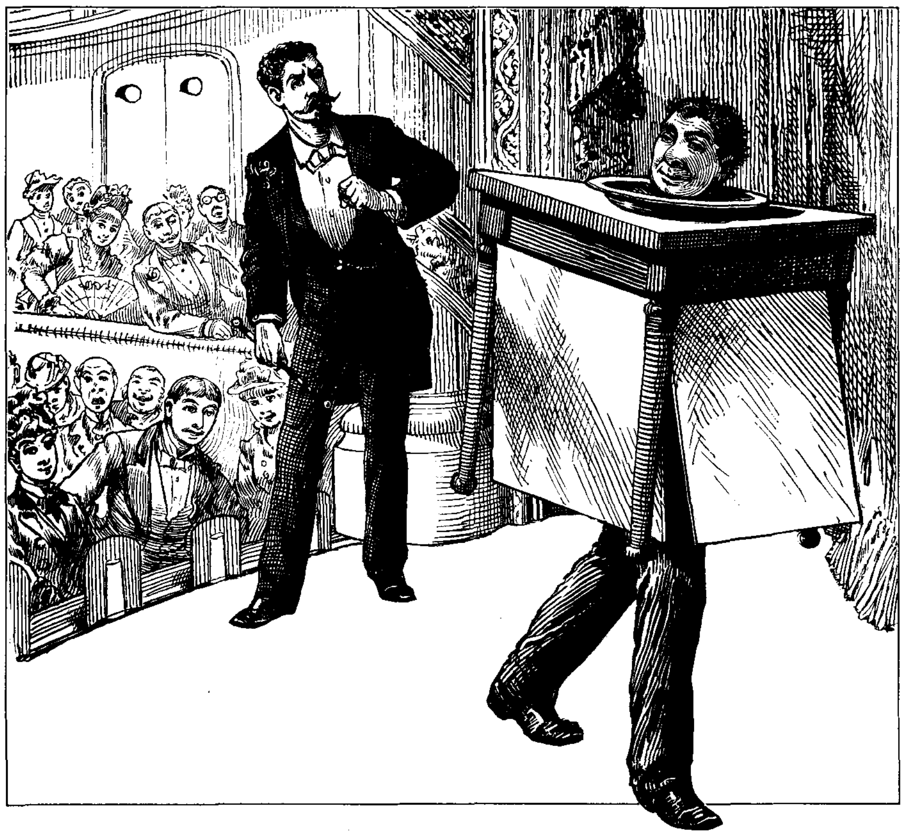
The rapidly declining prices and rising yields of these technologies are the central source of world economic progress. Contemporary economics, however, has arrived at no way of estimating the value of these items or their role in economic expansion and progress.

Indeed, most economic statistics assume that things which are dropping in price are declining in value. Yet only things which are dropping in price are likely to be contributing to economic growth.

Such considerations are alien to most economic analysis. Consider the Gross National Product and all the related measures of productivity and growth. These measures actually ascribe full value to the spread of parasitic bureaucracies, or to the shift of food preparation from your kitchen to Burger King's, or to the proliferation of subsidized steel ingots by West German factories or to the accumulation of capital in Japanese banks. But for the last twenty years the U.S. economic statisticians have essentially ignored the most important phenomenon in the world economy: the computer revolution in America. While the cost of computer power in all its forms has been dropping at a compound pace of about 30 percent a year, the national statisticians long assumed no change at all in the price of computing. In 1985, the Federal Reserve finally made a minor adjustment and pretended all was well, thus proclaiming that they had no idea of what is going on.

While the cost-effectiveness of computer components and related products has risen several millionfold and the price of a transistor has sunk from $9 in 1955 to about eight ten-thousandths of a cent in 1987, the estimates of national productivity have entirely ignored the change. Once again, things that drop in price are assumed to be dropping in value. Yet it is the astronomical reduction in the price of computing that has made it the most important force and most valuable industry in the world economy.

**No one shows any signs of knowing that we no longer live in geographic time and space, that maps of nations are fully as obsolete as the charts of a flat earth . . .**



In the microcosm, the conventional modes of measurement are simply irrelevant. All value comes from free minds; nothing else matters. Slaves are virtually worthless. By creating slaves, the capture of territory destroys its value. In the new world, socialists are capable chiefly of destruction. Wealth and power are products of emancipation, deregulation, immigration, tax reduction, liberty. Governments can increase their sway only by releasing their controls and emancipating their people. Authorities cannot seize power and wealth; what they seize they destroy. They can only grow strong by attracting and liberating creative men and women.

The world is awash in financial capital, glutted with raw materials, replete with petrochemical plants, steel mills, and other leviathan forms of material wealth. In relative terms, these things are nearly worthless. The world hungers for human creativity and freedom. They are incalculably precious. By imposing price controls, travel restrictions, capital curbs, or protectionist barriers, a nation can debauch its people, debase its currency, and flush its banks in a minute. By cutting taxes, extending liberty, and unleashing the ingenuity of its people, a nation can lure the precious wealth of willing workers and immigrant geniuses from the antipodes in rowboats and bring torrents of money in from the skies, bounced off satellites around the globe.

For the next twenty years, this will be the rule: follow the flows of refugees, watch the migration of capital, buy the waves of invention and the wealth of faith and hope, sell anything you can see.

Even the challenges of national defense yield best to information technologies. By basing the technologies of defense on the learning curve of the microcosm, the destructive threat can be contained. Creating weapons of defense chiefly based on information rather than on matter, free men can save themselves at a steadily declining cost. Replacing huge projectiles and megaton explosives with ever more precise and flexible information systems and vast hardware and software networks with a proliferation of intelligent machines, weapons of defense can be rendered harmless to anything but their offensive targets. Thus interceptors can be dispersed rather than centralized, obviating most of the software problems that perplex the Concerned Scientists. Above all, do not stop the arms race. In the microcosm, the arms race is spiraling increasingly into control.

Behind the backs of a bomb-blinded and Brobdingnagian world—its eyes glued to irrelevant tragedies of retarded nations—a new age is emerging. Listen to the technology, and the harmonies waft through the mind.

Consider a few new products introduced by three small companies in Massachusetts run by Kurzweil, one remarkable inventor-entrepreneur. They are inventions that change people's lives. These items do not represent any wide compass of technological change; the changes are qualitative. Blind people read; individuals perform entire Beethoven piano concertos on one instrument; people begin to talk to their word processors. The effects are already drastic to some people—to the blind and to the makers of flutes and pianos. Soon the makers of typewriters and keyboards will see their markets shrink. But the beginnings are nearly invisible in the GNP.

The source of the change is the microcosm: medium and metaphor, beginning with quantum physics. The medium of the new technology, the new physics is also a metaphor of the information economy. The key theme of the new physics is the obsolescence of conventional materialism; at the most fundamental level, matter does not behave like a Newtonian solid or like any substance normally seen as material. Particles ride on waves of possibility, masses spring from quantum wombs of probability. Possibilities and probabilities are not things; they are thoughts. They depict a world in which matter evolves essentially from mind.

Matter ultimately is based on information. Similarly, in the information economy, value also springs less from things than from thoughts. Material wealth gives way to immaterial products, in which the worth reposes in ideas rather than resources.

Listening to the technology, we do not suffer forces of inscrutable fragmentation. We find new harmonies of integrated knowledge, joining physics and economics, computer science and geopolitics, reality and religion. The information age is not some strange artificial development, contrary to the scientific understanding of reality. Reality too stems from information. The computer revolution is in the process of restoring the essential primacy of the word over the world, the logos over the firmament, mind over matter, free men over collectivist determinism.

The microcosm offers a new prophetic frame for the history of the technology. The key development was not the invention of the transistor. By functioning as a replacement for the vacuum tube, this new device looked backward as much as ahead. Even the creation of the integrated circuit, combining several transistors and other components on a chip, only intimated the possibilities of the technology. The crucial change was the prospect of creating programmable computer systems on single chips.

At that point, the microelectronics industry could rest on its laurels only at the cost of immediate obsolescence. If it tried to replace existing components, it would tie itself to existing systems while the microcosm was transforming the possibilities of all information technology. In order to succeed, the semiconductor industry would have to become a creator of new information systems. Rather than a components industry, it would have to embrace and fulfill the revolutionary metaphor of its physical medium.

In creating electronic devices, engineers began defining computer architectures, and in defining computer architectures, they shaped the future of information technologies, which in turn have reshaped human reality. The new physics became the microcosm of the future of the race. The descent into the microcosm became an expedition onto the frontiers of world industry, technology, and power.

In this descent, engineers made the amazing discovery that as things became smaller, comprising dimensions less than one-hundredth the width of a human hair, they did not become more vulnerable to defects, more difficult to build, or more complex to apply. As they entered the microcosm, making ever more infinitesimal transistors, functions became faster and cheaper, more powerful and more durable, more valuable and, most surprisingly, easier to build. As the technology became more powerful, it became easier to use and endowed individual humans with increasing dignity and authority.

The story of the microcosm is essentially a saga of American triumph. However, in the mid-1980s, a major crisis afflicted the establishment of American microelectronics and this crisis was widely believed to portend major shifts in the entire balance of power in all high technology. This crisis is often ascribed to the policy and behavior of the Japanese. But that vision skews the reality. The real crisis—the transformation of the industry from making components to designing systems—originated in the U.S. in the mid-1980s. The competition that issued from this change consisted chiefly of hundreds of new American electronics companies that today collectively generate revenues of close to $10 billion.

Now the industry is on the brink of yet another epochal step forward. Most analysis of the microcosm focuses on digital technology—devices based on interconnected switches that represent all phenomena in numerical quantities. The world, however, is not essentially numerical. All computers have to connect to the real world through analog or linear devices that can measure or mete out temperatures, voltages, waves, weights, pressures, frequencies, and amplitudes. Such devices include keyboards, displays, sensors, motors, and transducers. The development of analog devices that can connect microcosm to macrocosm (digital to analog, and back) was indispensable to the triumph of the new technology and it will be central to future advances.

In the course of these developments, feats of thought once regarded as difficult—such as computer chess—will seem relatively routine. (The triumph of a computer as world chess champion awaits only a resolute effort with application-specific chips.) But perceptual or analog powers once taken for granted will loom as the most formidable challenges. Hearing, seeing, interpreting, recognizing patterns, intuitively connecting them, these will be seen as the essence of thought. Digital computation itself will emerge as merely a new form of mechanics.

Although most so-called cognitive science focuses on ratiocination—the logical manipulation of digital data—perception is in fact central to thinking. Nearly half of all human brain cells seem to be devoted to perceptual processing. Perception is necessarily analog. The eyes and ears do not compute equations; the cortex does not digitize and only rarely counts. The full richness of the physiology of the brain provides a protean palette of analogs for all sensory experience. That is what, at the physical level, the brain is. Yet contemporary computers all give short shrift to analog experience. They rush to judgment, cutting up the rich sensory fabric into bits, abruptly converting all inputs to numerical form.

**The silicon in sand and glass forms a global ganglion of electronic and photonic media that leaves all history in its wake.**

By the time any problem has been digitized, however, most of the significant thought has already been done. The problem has been identified, defined, structured, measured, prepared for computation. The information content has been provided. From the onset of digitization, the problem becomes material and determinate, released from the creative vagaries of analogical thought into the mechanical routines of computation.

In order to create thinking machines, it will be necessary to give analogical powers to the computer. Analog is thus critical to most of the new domains of artificial intelligence. All major chip firms will soon have to comprehend analog electronics. As chips become more integrated, they will increasingly contain analog devices. Semiconductor companies will increasingly have to master the physics of analog circuitry.

Today, for example, it takes large computers—or specialized parallel processors—to perform Fourier transforms that convert sounds and other wave phenomena into their fundamental and harmonic sinewaves, or sinewaves into sounds and colors. Yet tiny portions of the eye and ear perform similar computations continually in real time by analog means. In order to fulfill the promise of computers, computer scientists will have to learn from the brain rather than claiming that it is only a rather sluggish digital machine.

As the industry moves in this direction, the next twenty years will see the continued merging of digital and analog technology, creating systems that go beyond mere computing to see and hear, synthesize and shape, learn and memorize. Sounds and images can already be stored in homogeneous digital form in large portable memories with access to huge networked databases. In the future, such memories will be far larger and more readily accessible. Today computers are far too slow to mingle realistic sound and graphic images in real time. Within the next twenty years, computer speeds will rise and memories grow to the point that all information can be homogeneously stored and instantly displayed.

In essence, it will be possible to create a portable appliance that can take dictation, translate English into Japanese and back, play music or synthesize small orchestras, display high definition films or other graphic materials on a flip up screen or project them onto a wall, or even form three dimensional graphic designs and extrude them as plastic models. The device will capture the knowledge of experts for immediate use at the scene of need, plug into global networks for transmission of voice or mail or access to encyclopedic databases of news, entertainment, and knowledge, all adaptable to personal taste.

Such an appliance is already feasible in theory. Its achievement awaits the predictable fulfillment of existing technological concepts. A development like SDI is nearly a sure thing. But the most important new developments cannot be predicted. They will unfold in the continuing adventure of ideas—the eternal surprises of the mind of man in touch with the mind of God.

Even the first phases of this new technology, however, are radically changing the dimensions of time and space. In the microcosm, the U.S. and Japan, or Europe and Asia, are already converging rapidly. The microcosm dictates a further collapse of time and space in the world economy, relegating the nation-state and its overweening rulers to the fringes of human history, and rolling up the powers of the cosmos into a crystal ball the size of a man's hand.

With this rock, the individual will arm his sling. The fall of Goliath—the imperial state—will reverberate through the structures of world society. The microcosm is changing politics, economics, and philosophy, and ushering in a new age of liberty. Far from demeaning man, as Orwell and others predicted, the new technologies are an unprecedented force of emancipation and hope.

Listening to the technology opens us to a new sense of the music of the spheres, a new sense of the power of ideas, a new integrated vision of the future of humanity. The microcosm is a new continent and its exploration brings richer rewards than were won by any earlier pioneers. It is the authentic frontier, invisible and invigorating, and closer to the foundation of reality and the reality of God.

This is the chief attainment of the last twenty years and the fulfillment of its promise is the most exciting challenge of the twenty years to come. ☐

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mourn the passing on October 7, 1987
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kindness, creativity, determination,
and patriotism, but rejoice in the
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# ASTONISHING MOMENTS

Distinguished observers select the single most astonishing development of the last twenty years.

**Hilton Kramer**
*Editor,* New Criterion

Looking back on the last twenty years, the historical event that cast the longest shadow and exerted the most decisive influence on my thinking was the emergence in the late sixties of the counterculture and the anti-Vietnam war movement. Their combined effect was to elevate anti-American sentiment, anti-middle class morality, and anti-intellectual cultural values to a position of commanding influence in our society, and so entrenched has that influence remained—despite the political changes of the last twenty years—that it even now dominates many of the institutions of government, business, culture, and family life.

**Franz M. Oppenheimer**
*Washington lawyer*

There is nothing more astonishing than to have one's expert opinion proved wrong, which happened to me in 1981. There was no greater gulf, I thought, between European and American attitudes than those toward inherited property. While most Europeans consider estate tax rates of 70 percent (77 percent up till 1977) with an exemption of $60,000 ($75,000 after 1977) virtually confiscatory, virtually every American I knew either thought such rates the essence of social justice or an essentially unremovable slice of American reality. Yet in 1981 the United States Congress with unprecedented speed and without hearings decided that from 1987 onwards a *pater familias* can go to his heavenly rest with the assurance that $600,000 of his estate will not be taxed by Uncle Sam; and that if he leaves an additional $600,000 to his widow, $1,200,000 will not be taxed. So let us not despair of the future of our social agenda: anything can happen in Congress.

**John Chamberlain**
*Syndicated columnist*

Thirty-seven years ago, when you could count professed conservatives and libertarians on two hands, we were hard put to it to round up seven or eight contributors to the first issue of a revived *Freeman* magazine. There were plenty of anti-Stalinists around, but if you scratched them they were all socialists. Our most friendly counselor in our moods of editorial despair was Frank Chodorov, a Grand Street philosopher who told us that it would take twenty years in order to have our way. All that we had to do was to keep butting and kicking. Frank based his prediction on his own study of the history of the Fabian Society, which had taken twenty years to make England socialist.

To me, the most astounding thing of the past twenty years is the accuracy of Frank Chodorov's thinking. We have turned the Fabian inevitability of gradualism to our own ends. The liberals have indeed cracked up. I'm sure that Frank Chodorov would have savored it if he had lived to see it.

**Edwin J. Feulner**
*President, Heritage Foundation*

The single most encouraging development of the past twenty years was the restoration of market economics as mainstream economic thought. The event which I consider "astonishing" took place on September 1, 1974, when the Nobel Committee announced that the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Science that year would be shared by Friedrich A. von Hayek. In subsequent years, Milton Friedman, George Stigler, and James Buchanan would join Hayek in receiving this award. The Nobel Prize Committee's decision signaled the international establishment's recognition of the importance of the work of these men in support of the market economy, the rule of law, individual freedom, property rights, and the redefinition of the appropriate role for government. Their work laid the foundation for Reagan's tax cuts, Thatcher's privatization, and the spread of the free economy around the world. Once again, we have seen that ideas have consequences.

**Elliott Abrams**
*Assistant Secretary of State*

The American defeat in Vietnam and its aftershocks—including the boat people, the fall of Laos and Cambodia, our greatly compromised ability and willingness to act forcefully to defend U.S. national security, which in turn helped produce Iran and Nicaragua—continue to dominate our political culture. If we look back on thirty years of *The American Spectator* in 1997, perhaps Nicaragua will loom as large as Vietnam—one way or another.

**Lewis E. Lehrman**
*Founder, Lehrman Institute*

That Jack Kemp might be elected President of the United States on a platform based unequivocally on the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence and upon the idea of a restoration of the authentic American Constitution in every significant respect—this fact is the most significant political event since the candidacy of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

**William F. Buckley, Jr.**
*Editor,* National Review

There is the temptation, in response to RET's invitation, to be funny, but I'll resist it. For one thing, I am on record. I said at the time to my son: "This is the most astonishing thing that has happened in my lifetime." And the reference was to Jonestown. A mad (anti-Christian) preacher, causing 900 people to drink Kool-Aid with cyanide in it. He had going for him only that Kool-Aid with and without cyanide is indistinguishable. But that episode told me about a reach of hypnotic demagogy I hadn't in a lifetime's reading thought still possible. It is in its way the most singular human event of our time.

**Norman Podhoretz**
*Editor,* Commentary

I guess I would have to say that to me the single most astonishing event of the past twenty years was Watergate. To this day, I find the whole thing impossible to believe or to understand. Does anyone?

**"STOP THEM DAMN PICTURES"**

That's what "Boss" Tweed demanded when he saw the handwriting on the Hall (Tammany, that is). But the pictures didn't stop. "Boss" Tweed met his maker in the Ludlow Street Jail and Thomas Nast put bitingly eloquent political cartoons squarely and permanently in the middle of American political life. Tweed aside, we think Emerson had it right when he said, *"Caricatures are often the truest history of the times."*

Thomas Nast

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**Michael Uhlmann**
*Washington lawyer*

The most astonishing occurrence of the past twenty years has been the speed with which nihilism has infected the philosophical bloodstream of the West. It has already corrupted the way we think about thinking and bids fair to corrupt the way we think about ourselves. Whether this folly of the intellectual class, with its attendant decadence and despair, will also corrupt the common sense of the people will be the central challenge of the next twenty years. There is nothing pre-determined about the outcome of that struggle: as always, everything will turn on what good men and women *choose* to do. The important point is to understand what is at stake, to find stomach for the battle, and to avoid the sin of despair. In the short run, things may get worse; in the long run—Keynes to the contrary—the laws of nature and of nature's God will endure.

**Joshua Muravchik**
*American Enterprise Institute*

The most important event of the last twenty years occurred on January 25, 1987 when the GIANTS won the Superbowl.

Football is manifestly man's highest endeavor and the definitive proof of the superiority of American culture. (Can you believe that Europeans look down on us while they spend their time playing soccer, and even try to cover it up by calling it football?) But football has always had a slight flaw for me, and that is my tragic love affair with the GIANTS. If you ask how I knew that my love was unrequited, you obviously never saw the GIANTS play. They were GIANTS like Bert Lahr was a LION.

The team was run by a man who had inherited ownership of it, a fact which furnished Marxists with an unparalleled opportunity to illustrate to the masses the irrationality of capitalism. When asked why he didn't take certain steps that most observers believed would strengthen the team, he once replied that the GIANTS wanted to win their own way. Apparently this way consisted of something other than scoring more points than the opposing team. The situation eventually made the ruling class so uneasy that the owner was compelled to turn management over to a former high school history teacher who gradually reversed the team's decrepitude, thereby furnishing long-awaited proof of the value of history. The reversal reached its sublimit last January 25. The score was 39 to 20.

**Taki**
*Columnist, London* Spectator

As a European, I found the phenomenon of Watergate to be the most astonishing event of the last twenty years. We Europeans believe in powerful presidents and here was a powerful (?) president of the then most powerful nation on earth who had just won a landslide election and who was run out of town by two mendacious hacks, an editor who once flacked for the Kennedys, and some publicity hungry pols.

Watergate proved to us Europeans what disproportionate power and influence the seven deadly sinners—as Paul Johnson calls CBS, NBC, ABC, *Newsweek, Time,* the *New York Times,* and the *Washington Post*—have in America and how this power can be ill used. The two mendacious hacks invented Deep Throat, and the man who chose to turn a blind eye while the Kennedys used the CIA and the FBI to blackmail their political enemies and intimidate business executives—not to mention what they did to Marilyn Monroe—let them run loose on the pages of the newspaper that gave us Ms. Janet Cooke. The rest of the deadly sinners followed, and we got Communist South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Angola as a result. Oh, yes, and Jimmy Carter.

What was Richard Nixon's crime? Ask many intelligent Europeans and they will be nonplussed. Almost as nonplussed as I am over what Hunt and Liddy were doing in the Watergate in the first place. Nonplussed or not, however, the fact is that, where Richard Nixon was concerned, the seven deadly sinners were to truth and fairness what Teddy Kennedy is to anorexia.

**Kenneth Minogue**
*Author,* The Liberal Mind

In the wake of the last British General Election, Neil Kinnock uttered some words which ought to become famous: "Self-interest is not necessarily selfish." At a stroke, this proposition removes the basic socialist objection to capitalism as a system. If taken seriously, it would mean that the discussion on public policy could get back to the moral and practical issues from which it was diverted, a century or more ago, by the dream that the right kind of society could solve the human condition: such has been the major category mistake of our time. Other mistakes will no doubt soon turn up to bewitch the mind of man, but it would be some small triumph if our century could record the discarding of at least one grand error.

**Ernest van den Haag**
*Fordham University*

The past twenty years have been so filled with astonishing developments that it is hard to single out any one. We have had peace longer than ever, rising prosperity almost everywhere, a considerable spread of democracy, and, not least, in most Western countries people—with the exception of most intellectuals—have come to their senses and voted in governments to pursue more conservative—in short, less featherheaded—policies than before.

I have read some good books—lately Roger Scruton's *Sexual Desire*—among the usual number of bad ones. *The American Spectator* has appeared. It is brilliantly edited as shown by the fact that it solicits my contributions. There are now a number of good magazines in addition to *National Review.* Skirts are getting higher once more and the stock market follows—what more can you want?

**Richard A. Viguerie**
*President, Viguerie Company*

I remember it like it was yesterday.

Hours after Ronald Reagan's Inauguration, it began: the most astounding 100 days of any presidency. The shutdown of the Departments of Energy and Education. The cutoff of federal funds to liberal advocacy groups, the reforms that crippled the foreign service union and allowed the President to set his own foreign policy. The return of federal lands to the people of Alaska and other states. The appointment of droves of well-qualified conservatives of every type—blacks and women, evangelicals and "ethnics," entrepreneurs and labor leaders—replacing limousine-liberal Democrats and country-club Republicans.

And, soon thereafter, the presentation to Congress of the first balanced budget in over a decade. How proud we were when the President vetoed Congress's unbalanced budget, when he shut down the federal government for two weeks! It was then, of course, that the American people realized they didn't much need a federal government, after all. Except for the Defense Department, which, with the help of the Free Nicaraguans, liberated Grenada and Cuba.

Did it surprise anyone when the Republicans captured both houses of Congress in '82?

Today it all seems like a dream. What? It *was* a dream?

Oh.

Well, in that case, the most astonishing event of the last twenty years is that it *didn't* happen.

**John Von Kannon**
*Vice President, Heritage Foundation*

I find it most astonishing that the party of Franklin Roosevelt is still a major force in American life—even more the majority party. Jim Farley and the other pols helped FDR put together the Democratic coalition of a workable majority. What majority does the Democratic party represent today?

Consider the following groups and pronouncements exempt from criticism by today's Jim Farleys and Franklin Roosevelts:

- Bigotry against white males.
- Bigotry against Jews (depending on the source).
- Bigotry against Christians (if they take their religion too seriously).
- Self-inflicted AIDS carriers.
- The Mafia.
- Certain senile Supreme Court Justices.

So how has the Democratic party remained such a force? Sadly, it's a brief answer:

The Republican party.

**Roger Kaplan**
*Associate editor,* Reader's Digest

The most interesting development of the past two decades must surely be that in all this time R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., hasn't put in an honest day of work. He has demonstrated that it is possible to be a conservative and yet be devoted to the world of ideas. Heretofore, conservatives would have—and I must say not without reason—considered it perverse for a young man to propose to spend his days at a typewriter. Making and selling typewriters, perhaps—but surely making use of them was an activity fit only for ne'er-do-wells.

Oh, of course, let us acknowledge our debts: there was *National Review*, there was the *Freeman* and other smaller journals; we would have gotten nowhere without them and even today we would be nowhere without them. And journalism itself, man by man, was never inhospitable to anyone with strong views; no one was ever told, "You have right-wing views therefore you cannot do this." Nonetheless, it was *The American Spectator*, coming on the scene at a time when America seemed to be disintegrating into mental, moral, and political anarchy, that made it known that, for some of us, at least, who didn't much care to take over the family business anyway (mine was in Chapter Ten), the century might be—might remain—American.

It's nice to know conservatives are taken seriously. First of all, it's rewarding; and we can tell our mothers, wives, and mistresses that contrary to what they say it is demonstrably untrue that we are mental cripples and slouches. Moreover, since as conservatives we take our ideas seriously, it's good to have the hope that everything we and our mentors have predicted about the fate of our country may not come to pass after all.

However, it is important to understand what accompanies this deep change in conventional wisdom. When ideas become current—when politicians, journalists, or anyone else speak conservative without realizing it, as for many years they spoke liberal without realizing it—their test is no longer how they play in intellectual magazines or for that matter in any magazines, but how closely they correspond to reality.

For us, this means that if the transformation of American ideas was the most important event of the past twenty years, the most important project of the next twenty must be to see our ideas succeed in practice. So let's think big: In twenty years, the success of liberty will be assured, our country will be impregnable.

And we can then take our places in the family firms.

→

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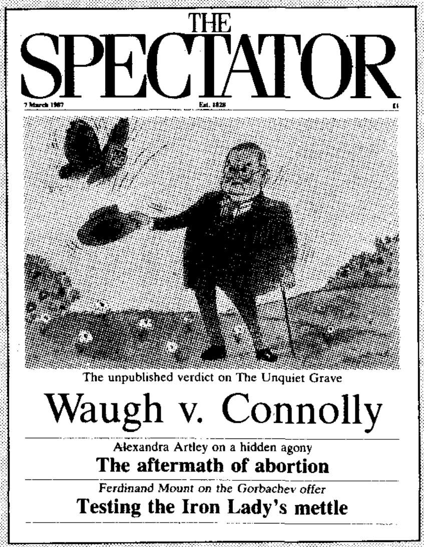

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**William A. Rusher**
*Publisher,* National Review

The most astonishing development of the past twenty years—indeed, as I believe Irving Kristol has contended, of this century—has been the worldwide and near-total collapse of socialism as a viable politico-economic theory. It seems only yesterday that it bestrode the world, while we free-enterprisers cowered in our closets. Now socialism has been officially repudiated in many countries, and quietly jettisoned in virtually all the rest, including (incredibly) Red China and the Soviet Union itself. The reason? It was tried extensively, and has failed spectacularly.

**David Horowitz**
*Former editor,* Ramparts

If I were looking at the twenty years ahead, as the intoxicated young radical I was in 1967, what would appear most astonishing to me would be my own passage over to the other side of the political barricades. Looking backward in 1987, as the sober conservative I have become, what is astonishing to me is the sight of my former comrades—those who tried so earnestly and maliciously in the sixties to subvert and destroy the most tolerant, egalitarian, and democratic community on earth—not only still running free, but still pursuing their malicious quest to destroy this magnanimous Republic and replace it with another Marxist gulag.

**Edward I. Koch**
*Mayor, New York City*

Of all the upheavals of the last twenty years, the one that strikes me as the most uplifting is the prematurely announced death and subsequent resurrection of the great American heartland—the Northeast.

Maybe it was the glare of the mighty Sunbelt. Perhaps their trumpets deafened us. But a funny thing happened on the way to the cemetery—New York and New England arose in renewed health and vigor. The frost has melted and the rust has been scraped away.

**Howard Phillips**
*Chairman, Conservative Caucus*

The most astonishing political fact of the past twenty years is the failure of conservatives during three Republican presidencies (those of Nixon, Ford, and Reagan) fully to comprehend and effectively oppose the control of U.S. foreign policy by a commercial clique which has lined the pockets of its banks, law firms, brokerage houses, and multinational corporations at the expense of America's moral standing and geostrategic vital interests, even as their anti-patriotic plunder has been subsidized by unwary taxpayers and favor-currying congressmen of high ambition and low character.

**Arch Puddington**
*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*

The McGovernite takeover of the Democratic party. When else have those regularly featured in the *TAS* Current Wisdom section been able to boast of sitting at the commanding heights of America's largest political party? Runner-up is a tie between the miraculous rise of Solidarity and the Grenada invasion. Regarding the latter event, the very fact that the liberation of a tiny Caribbean nation should strike one as unusual or surprising suggests that while McGovern's followers may no longer control the Democratic party, their baleful influence remains powerful.

**Jack Kemp**
*Congressman, New York*

The single most astonishing development of the past twenty years is Bob Tyrrell's move from Bloomington to Babylon-on-the-Potomac. It's as if Mohammed had opened a distillery, or Moses had gone into hog-farming.

Otherwise, the most astonishing development of the last twenty years is the utter abandonment of socialism as an economic ideal, as evidenced by the world-wide consensus to cut steeply progressive tax rates and deploy free-market forces to fight poverty. Democratic capitalism is not only on the side of history; it is on the side of people everywhere.

**Leslie Lenkowsky**
*President, Institute for Educational Affairs*

Although I don't think there was any link between the two, the year after *The American Spectator* was founded my wife and I were married. At the time, one would have almost certainly given us the better chance of lasting twenty years (as we have); now, I am not so sure. Even a publication a good deal shakier than Tyrrell's was in the old days (and that is quite shaky indeed) is likely to last longer than the typical love-match made today. And if not the most surprising development of the last twenty years, the weakening of family bonds is perhaps the most far-reaching and most difficult to undo.

**James Q. Wilson**
*Collins professor of management, UCLA*

The most astonishing development of the last twenty years has been the transformation—more precisely, the *inversion*—of liberal thought. In the early 1960s, liberals favored nuclear power, believed that blacks should have equal opportunities but not special favors, endorsed Keynesian economics, and wanted the United States to use military and economic power to contain Soviet (and proxy) expansion. Today, liberals oppose nuclear power, support "affirmative action," claim to believe in the virtues of balanced budgets, and support the use of American military power only when there is clear evidence that a Soviet brigade has actually landed on Long Island for reasons other than attending a cocktail party. No doubt conservatives have changed as well. But the liberal change is more important, because in the long run, liberals run the country.

**Midge Decter**
*Committee for the Free World*

The most astonishing event of the past two decades—though not admittedly the most important—was William F. Buckley's advising Robert Bauman, on learning of his old friend's homosexuality, that he should resign from the House of Representatives. How could Mr. Buckley not have known that whereas sleeping with girls is nowadays enough to destroy a man's candidacy, soliciting adolescent boys is positively helpful, and constitutes grounds for the claim to the higher candor, bravery, sensitivity, and compassion?

**T. Boone Pickens, Jr.**
*United Shareholders Association*

One of the most startling revelations of my lifetime has been the laziness and arrogance of America's corporate titans. Growing up in Oklahoma, I saw the business establishment as the driving force behind the free enterprise system that built the greatest nation on earth.

Boy, was I naive. My introduction to corporate America as a geologist at Phillips Petroleum over thirty-five years ago was an eye-opening experience. Yet since then, I have seen that a bureaucratic mentality pervades corporate America. Instead of encouraging imagination, creativity, and resourcefulness, the major corporations stifle initiative and reward complacency. It's no wonder that we have relinquished our position as the world's unquestioned industrial leader.

**Maurice Cranston**
*London School of Economics*

The most astonishing event of the past twenty years is the Solidarity rising in Poland—a purely trade-unionist protest against a left-wing despotism. The "political general strike" foreseen by Georges Sorel as the workers' only way to introduce Communism has thus come about, ironically, as a workers' movement against Communism. The Soviets could quickly crush the rebellions of dissident satellite bosses such as Nagy in Hungary and Dubček in Czechoslovakia, but against the nonviolent moral force of the Polish workers (inspired as those workers were by a deep Christian faith) the Soviets did not dare send in their tanks.

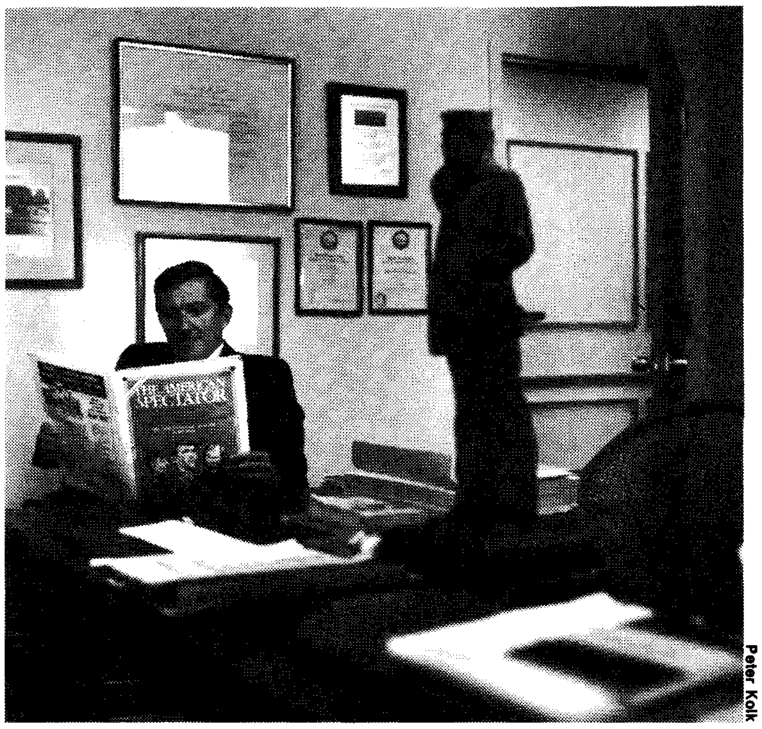
**R. Randolph Richardson**
*President, Smith Richardson Foundation*

The accelerating pace of change generates "astonishing developments" almost daily. But nearly all are but symptoms of shifts in widely held perceptions. It's these shifts in the bedrock of opinion that create the future, the era-shaping movements that tomorrow's Paul Johnsons will discern long after 98 percent of today's news is forgotten.

A fishing industry trade paper reports that socialist New Zealand is using the market mechanism to distribute entry rights in certain fisheries, having concluded this will provide better resource preservation than quotas and regulations. The nominally socialist government of France is selling the state's equities in industries as rapidly as it can find buyers. And before Mrs. Thatcher retires there's a possibility that pound notes will be the only product produced by the British government. In the Unfree World, Communists are struggling with the familiar dilemma of an ideology overrun by reality, having at last discovered that incentives and uncontrolled prices do more for production than the knout and the Gulag ever could.

The underlying change in perception is that socialism is a failure everywhere save in the minds of leftwing Democrats. But if one takes socialism to mean Lenin instead of Marx, it's all too alive in the context of Russian military power. Never has a nation performed so poorly economically and gained so much in armaments and strategic advantage over such a protracted period. Joy over the triumph of capitalism must be tempered by recalling that the Mongol hordes of Genghis Khan enslaved nations culturally and economically far ahead of themselves. ☐

**American Spectators . . . not just voyeurs.**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*Hospital at Jaghori, run by Medecins Sans Frontieres, minutes after a Soviet MI-24 helicopter gunship attack.*

# IN AFGHANISTAN HOSPITAL PATIENTS RECEIVE VERY SPECIAL ATTENTION.

In Afghanistan, nothing is sacred. Not children. Not the elderly. Not even the wounded and dying. According to a *Helsinki Watch* report, Soviet forces systematically destroy hospitals and clinics. And Soviet military units arrest civilian medical personnel working in resistance-held areas.

Last July, a young Afghan paramedic trained by Freedom Medicine, and two wounded patients *on stretchers*, were murdered by Soviet commando forces after their village was attacked.

These assaults on hospitals, clinics and health care workers are part of a larger Soviet strategy to drive the survivors either out of the country or into submission.

Over the past eight years, nearly a million Afghans have been killed and more than five million have become refugees. Hundreds of villages have been bombed into rubble. Livestock slaughtered. Farmlands devastated. Entire regions rendered void of human life.

Since 1980 the Afghanistan Relief Committee has been sending medical aid, food and support for schools and villagers *inside* Afghanistan.

ARC provides aid through a number of internationally recognized organizations such as Freedom Medicine, which trains Afghans as paramedics to work in villages where there are no doctors; Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), whose heroic doctors and nurses set up clinics *within* Afghanistan; and others.

In response to the Soviet attacks on hospitals, this year ARC helped MSF build an underground clinic in Ghazni province. Camouflaged to blend in with the surrounding rocky terrain, it is busy serving wounded Afghans. Your generous contributions made construction possible.

This is just the beginning.

Inside Afghanistan infant mortality rates are soaring. With funding from ARC, a pilot inoculation program in one region is vaccinating 5000 children, and all women of childbearing age, against tetanus, diptheria and pertussis. Vaccines have to be carried by horseback over treacherous mountain passes in "cold boxes" to maintain a proper temperature for some 10 days, all the while dodging hostile forces.

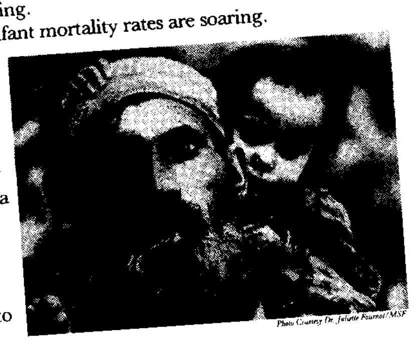

*Photo Courtesy Dr. Juliette Fournot/MSF*

But there's much more to be done.

Those who refuse to flee need your help now more than ever. Won't you open your heart before you turn this page?

The Afghan people still have hope. The hope that the world will not ignore their plight.

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Neil Howe

# AMERICA IN THE YEAR 2007

We'll be lots older, paying huge taxes, producing less and less, unless . . .

Over the course of the 1960s, it grew increasingly difficult to talk about the future without apocalyptic visions and rhetorical overkill. First we saw movies about nuclear holocaust, then we read books about the horrors of overpopulation, novels about ecological disaster, and popular studies forecasting the end of all raw materials. A further gush of steam was generated by major works of science fiction in the last gasp of its golden age: the wedding of the Second Coming with blow-me-away psychedelic end-games. In retrospect, it all seems a kaleidoscope of fragmented hysteria. Which came first, *On the Beach* or *Silent Spring*? *Dr. Strangelove* or *Childhood's End*? The Club of Rome or *Stranger in a Strange Land*?

But today the smoke has cleared and things have settled down; looking at the future, we are a lot calmer than we were twenty years ago. One reason for the change, of course, is the aging of the culturo-centric Baby Boom (for whose benefit so many artists and writers, even those much older, have labored). Two decades ago the Boomers needed a vision of the world that blew up at the end of a very late adolescence; today they need a vision that matches check number 360 of a 30-year mortgage. Another reason may be the declining interest, among all age groups, in serious public life or political action. With Reagan's retirement, the World War II generation is packing it in. The upcoming Boomers, who would like to be dutiful but found that politics "didn't work out" after Watergate, are busy pursuing private "lifestyles." The post-Boomers, meanwhile, are trying madly to get rich. Since 1982, voter participation rates are again in steep decline and most Americans view Gramm-Rudman and the approaching primaries with the same bemusement and detachment with which one watches the Saturday-morning cartoons. It's hard to have a collective vision of the future without a collective vision of the present.

This emptiness at the heart of our future self-image ought to be at least some cause for concern—since it is without many precedents over the last hundred years (the 1960s included). In both good times and bad—from the Victorians through the Yippies, from H. G. Wells and Jules Verne through the Chicago Century of Progress Exhibition of 1933 and then on through Orwell and Huxley, Kubrick and Asimov—America and the West have been obsessed with the future as purposeful direction. We called it "Progress," and it meant the forward transformation of our physical and social environment according to iron laws of civilized development. To be sure (especially in the 1960s), there were sometimes grave worries, even nightmares, about where progress would lead. Progress might be dehumanizing, a "machine in the garden." Yet like an unquestioned premise, it remained inevitable.

No longer. Progress presupposes that we see ourselves as borrowers from the past and investors in the future. Increasingly, however, we see ourselves as borrowers from both past and future. Thus, instead of progress, we sense somehow that the ultimate direction must be stasis or retrogression. Over the past twenty years, our highbrow interest has switched from renaissance to dark ages; our escapist genre from hitech sci fi to swords and sorcery; and our futurist cinema from planetary exploration to escapades by renegades (with names like Max, Road Warrior, Blade Runner, and Snake) amid the slow- or fast-crumbling ruins of civilization. From today's vantage point, the 1960s has a nineteenth-century charm about it. To worry about apocalypse, you at least have to think you're going somewhere. Slogans such as "ZPG," "Gross National Pollution," and "imperialist pig" could only be popular in an era when Americans were still reasonably adept at having kids, saving, producing wealth, and projecting a formidable presence in world affairs.

Over the next twenty years, I think it's fair to say, events will force us to reevaluate our attitude toward precisely these activities, especially raising children and investing materially in the future—activities which are, after all, the ingredients of the progress we once took for granted. We will, in the year 2007, be facing much clearer and much harder choices than we are today. In this essay I will discuss those choices, primarily in terms of the demographic and economic trends that we are likely to be experiencing and debating over the next two decades.

One obvious fact must be emphasized at the outset: the year 2007 is only twenty years away. Barring catastrophe, therefore, our world is bound to resemble very much the one we're already living in. Then as now, we'll be driving cars, fixing leaky faucets, filling out W-2 forms, and decorating Christmas trees. By most standards, we will remain an affluent nation. But that doesn't mean that we won't be a different nation. Twenty years from now we may be so burdened by demographic and economic liabilities that visions of a better future will seem practically unattainable without onerous and long-term sacrifices in both our public and private lives. The unthinking progress of the 1960s may seem exotic beyond recapture, and the frightful doomsday we then saw approaching will look strangely like the cultural artifact of an era of innocence.

**Aging versus the Youth Illusion**

Over the past twenty years, America has been quietly overtaken by two demographic revolutions. Both of these—an unprecedented decline in U.S. fertility rates and an explosion in U.S. longevity—show no signs of abat-

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*Neil Howe, director of research at Americans for Generational Equity, is co-writing a book on America's thirteen generations.*

ing any time soon. What remains is to figure out exactly how they will change our future. So at the risk of seeming a bit technical, let me offer at the outset the fertility and longevity scenarios that I think most likely.

At its Baby Boom peak in 1957, the average total fertility rate for U.S. women (the number of children born to each woman over her lifetime) was 3.68. It declined slowly to 3.17 in 1964 (the last year of the Boom) and then rapidly to a low of 1.74 in 1976 (far beneath its earlier nadir in the "baby-bust" 1930s). Since then, despite the surge from late-birthing Boomers, it has risen only slightly to about 1.84 today. Hereafter, we can expect it to fall gradually to about 1.65 by the year 2007 and to 1.60 by the year 2050.

The social and economic factors causing such a gradual decline appear overwhelming: later marriage ages, higher divorce rates, the renewed rise in the use of cheap and effective oral contraceptives (now that the medical worries over their use has abated), and, perhaps most importantly, the female rush into the labor force. These trends seem especially powerful among younger women, i.e., those who still have future children to bear: polls indicate that a very small and declining proportion of them want to have more than two children, and recent census surveys indicate that a higher proportion of them are planning full-time careers—a marked shift from the part-time work habits of their mothers. Several large industrial countries including West Germany and Italy already have total fertility rates below 1.60.

As for mortality, we can expect a percentage gain nearly equal to the dramatic improvement we have already experienced over the past couple decades. The main reason will be a continued decline in age-adjusted death rates from cardiovascular disease (which now accounts for about 50 percent of all deaths), due to better diets and the delayed impact of swift advances in drug therapies for hypertension (in the 1970s) and for high blood cholesterol levels (during the late 1980s and early 1990s). The decline in the popularity of smoking will also, of course, have a delayed and favorable impact. The overall result will show up mainly in longer life expectancy for the elderly. In 1967, the typical 65-year-old could look forward to 15.1 years of life; today, it's 17.4 years of life; in the year 2007, it will be 19.9 years of life.

That leaves immigration, and here let's keep it simple and take the "middle" census estimate: 450,000 immigrants per year (somewhat higher than the average for the past two decades).

**Twenty years from now we may be so burdened by demographic and economic liabilities that visions of a better future will seem practically unattainable without onerous and long-term sacrifices in both our public and private lives.**

With these assumptions, let's crank out the numbers. Between now and 2007, 44 million Americans will die, 62 million will be born, and 9 million new immigrants will become Americans. Our total population, now about 243 million, will rise to 271 million. Most of those leaving our company, of course, are now already in advanced old age—which leads to a question that may interest some readers: what is the chance that any of us will still be around in the year 2007? If you're now age 25, the chances are 97 out of 100; if you're now age 40, the chances are 89 out of 100. Even if you're now age 60, you can cheer up. Odds are you will indeed witness the brave new world. The improving actuarial tables say that over half of today's 60-year-olds (53 percent) will yet see the numbers "2007" inscribed at the top of their Social Security checks.

In terms of generations, America will have advanced another notch. The "Lost" generation (born between 1883 and 1900—many of whom fought in World War I, bought Model T's, and voted for Harding) will of course have disappeared from the ranks of today's "old old." We will think of them then as we now think of the veterans of Teddy Roosevelt's charge up San Juan Hill, a group lost to living memory. The ranks of octogenarians and nonagenarians will be filled by the "Swing" generation (born between 1901 and 1925), the parents and grandparents of the Baby Boomers. Tales of the Depression and Iwo Jima will be heard from the creaky voices of the sizable number of them (11 million) still alive.

Meanwhile, the "young old" age-brackets will be filled by the so-called "Silent" generation (born between 1926 and 1945); in the year 2007, the very youngest of this generation will be hitting the age of 62. Today we are already talking about a "Baby Boom" President. If history is any guide, however, the White House, Cabinet, and senior congressional committee posts will be dominated by Silents until some years past the turn of the century. In 2007, the Silents will be just beginning to relinquish their political leadership.

As for the Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), they will be sitting squarely in middle age. In 1996 we will see the predictable *Time* magazine cover "The Baby Boom Turns 50." And just as predictably, in 2006 it will be "The Baby Boom Turns 60." Boomers will span the ages of 43 through 61 in the year 2007. Behind the Baby Boomers are a generation I call the "Thirteenth" generation (they are, in fact, number thirteen since the first American generation of Ben Franklin). The oldest of them were born in 1965—the ones who came of age in the midst of Madonna melodies, trade-deficit headlines, and overflowing B-schools. Though we don't yet know where to cut them off, let's just draw a plausible line at 1987. By the year 2007, the Thirteenth generation will be age 20 through 42.

The kids and teenagers of the year 2007, of course, remain as yet nameless, faceless, and unborn. One thing we do know about them, however, is that they will be small in number. Today Americans are giving birth to about 3.5 million children yearly—a number that will shrink to about 3 million by 2007. In the midst of the 1950s Baby-Boom creation, by contrast, a much smaller population of adult Americans was giving birth to well over 4.0 million children yearly.

The far-reaching consequences of our current population trajectory—many of which will be fiercely debated over the next twenty years—promise to live up to the celebrated remark that "demography is destiny." It is not exactly a pretty picture: the final exhaustion of our population growth; the unprecedented aging of our population as a whole; and the exploding resource costs that the multitude of us who are older will pose to the declining number of us who are younger.

Though any fertility rate beneath about 2.1 children per woman must inevitably lead to a declining population (absent a large stream of immigrants), the delayed impact of our fertility decline means that the peak years for different age brackets will be decades apart. The peak population year for American children, for instance, is already more than fifteen years behind us. That year was 1971, when over 77 million children and teenagers filled our schools and nurseries. (With Cambodia and all, you might have missed the news.) It is highly unlikely that any of us will again see so many kids in our lifetimes.

The turnaround in the size of the U.S. labor force will hit much later. In fact, it may hit precisely in the year 2007. Thus far during the 1980s, with a torrent of women as well as the tail-end of the Baby Boom looking for first jobs, our labor force has been growing by about 1.5 million per year. By the early 1990s, the growth will slow to about one million yearly, and then, by the turn of the century, to about 500,000 yearly—or just about the level of annual immigration. Six or seven years later, even our immigration margin will be unable to close the widening gap between retiring workers and new native 20-year-olds. Sometime near 2007, say the projections, our total labor force of full- and part-time workers will hit its historic high of about 140 million workers. Thereafter, the numbers will decline. Twenty years further on, when three out of every four Baby Boomers will still be alive, the size of our labor force will have already dropped to about 127 million.

Something else will happen in the year 2027: assuming our demographic engine remains on steady course, the total U.S. population will reach its apogee of about 283 million and then enter a gathering, inexorable decline. For decades thereafter, more than the entire decline will be due to ever fewer children and working-age adults; the elderly population over age 65 will keep rising. (And just in case the gloom-and-doomers are wondering, the elderly population doesn't peak until the year 2060, according to these projections—just ten years before our total population has fallen back to its 1987 level. That will be about the time when most grandchildren of the Baby Boom are themselves contemplating retirement.)

Demography, in short, is getting ready to hand us an event we are already calling the "aging of America." Here it helps to have some perspective. During most of America's colonial era and through the Revolution until about 1820, the median age of the American population held steady at about 16 years of age. Thereafter, due mainly to falling fertility, it rose more or less continuously—to 19 by 1850, 20 by 1870, 25 by 1920, and 30 by 1950. The advent of the Baby Boom temporarily reversed the trend and pushed the median age back down to 25 by 1965. Thereafter it has been rising again. In 1980, we passed our earlier high point of 30. In 2007, we will reach 40. Twenty years further on, in 2027, we will reach 45.

These are the sorts of numbers which overturn our popular historical stereotypes. We think of the America of our Founding Fathers, for instance, as a country of crusty-faced patriarchs and white hair. We forget that the image was deliberate: young men wore wigs and lied about their age in order to appear older and thereby gain respect and honor. In reality, early America was overflowing with huge families and a teeming abundance of kids. Nearly two out of five Americans were age 9 or younger (twice the proportion that prevails today). Captains of sailing ships were in their early 30s. And in the frontier territories—Kentucky in the 1830s, Oregon in the 1850s, and Nebraska in the 1860s—the median age was even younger than the national average. A full 75 percent of the inhabitants were under age 25; a mere 2 percent to 3 percent were over age 45.

Two centuries later, after the cumulative impact of youth-idolizing writers from Emerson to Dylan and youth-idolizing Presidents from "Teddy" to "John" to "Jimmy," we see ourselves as a nation of eternal youth and adolescent aspirations. In fact, we have become a much older people. While the average age of the Virginian Presidents and their cabinets in the early 1800s was in the early 40s, the average age of that same group in the 1970s and 1980s has been in the early 60s. Today, about 32 percent of our population is over age 45, a share that will rise sharply to 43 percent by 2007 when the Baby Boom matures, and rise further to 49 percent by 2027. At that point, nearly half of our entire population will be eligible (after age 50) for membership in the American Association of Retired Persons.

One certain outcome of this collision course between nature and self-image is a dramatic expansion in the share of America's total economic resources publicly devoted to compensating for the infirmities of age.

To grasp the magnitude of the expansion, let's jump forward forty years to the year 2027—when nearly all the Baby Boomers are past retirement age. The number of working taxpayers will by then be a mere 5 million larger than it is today (a growth of about 4 percent); the number of retirees, on the other hand, will be 30 million larger (a growth of nearly 90 percent). Today, each Social Security retiree is supported by a 10.1 percent payroll tax on 4.8 workers; but by the year 2027 he must be supported by a 17 percent payroll tax on 2.3 workers. In addition, Social Security disability benefits will grow inexorably due to the aging of the workforce: from 1.1 percent of payroll today, to 2.6 percent of payroll in 2027.

This is not to mention the growing pay-as-you-go burden of far more generous public-worker retirement programs—federal military and civil service retirement, and state and local retirement. Here we're talking about the equivalent of an additional 4 percent of taxable payroll. And then there are the unfunded liabilities of private-sector retirement plans, liabilities that sooner or later will call for a taxpayer bailout. All told, public cash transfers for retirement and disability are due to rise from an aggregate burden of about 15.7 percent of payroll today (to use a convenient yardstick) to about 29.1 percent of payroll by 2027.

Yet the growth in cash benefits will by no means be the biggest burden of our collective aging. Far more explosive will be the growth in health-care spending on behalf of the elderly. Here we face not only the arithmetic of retirement—longer lifespans and fewer working children—but an arithmetic accelerated by three extra multipliers: the rising number of treatable acute and chronic illnesses; the rising real cost of skilled labor and technology per treatment; and the rising incidence of illness among the elderly due to the "aging" of the elderly themselves.

The first two multipliers are self-evident, and receive ample media attention every time someone receives a second triple bypass or every month the medical price index rises five times faster than the CPI. But the last multiplier deserves some explanation, for its long-term effect is especially explosive. Longer life expectancy means a disproportionate growth in the oldest age groups, and it is well documented that every measure of health-care utilization rises exponentially from age 50 on. In 1984, for instance, the average reimbursed hospital cost for Medicare enrollees over age 80 ($1,781) was more than double the cost for enrollees age 65 to 75. As for nursing-home care (for which the average cost in 1986 was $22,000 per year), we need only to review the incidence of Alzheimer's disease (5 percent of those age 65 to 74; 20 percent of those age 80 and over) or of activity-limiting disabilities (24 percent of those age 65 to 74; 48 percent of those age 80 and over).

Now consider: over the next forty years, the elderly population as a whole (age 65 and over) will grow by 121 percent, but the population age 80 and over will grow by 178 percent, and the population age 90 and over will grow by 405 percent. By the year 2040, alas, there will be more Americans over age 80 than there are now Americans over age 65—and with fewer taxpaying workers than we have today.

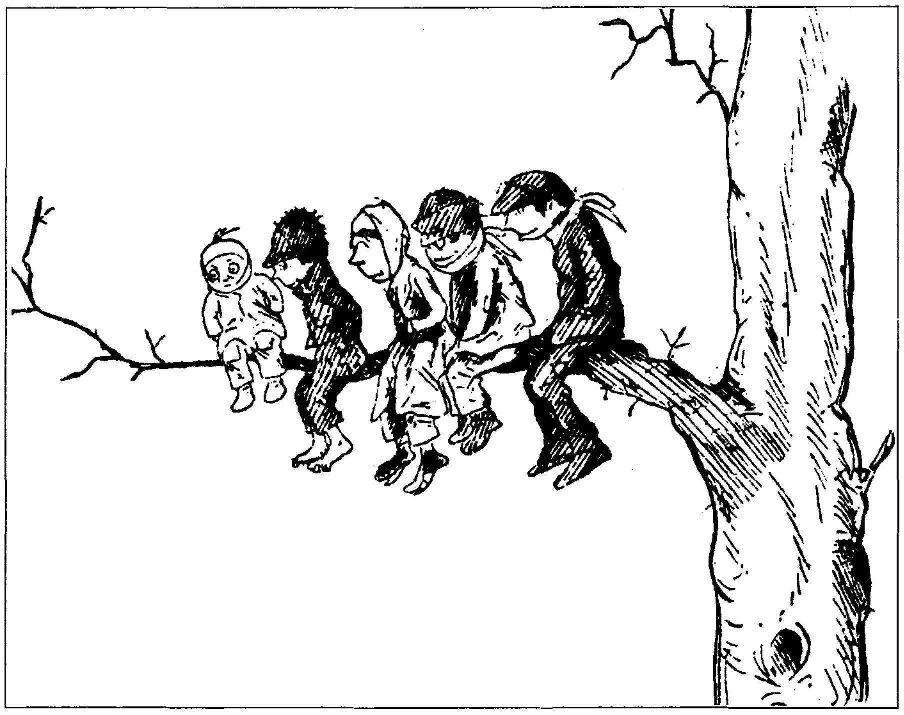
There is, to be honest, no believable projection for public health-care benefits in the year 2027. Even conservative ones tend to spin off the chart. The official Social Security projection that matches our demographic assumptions estimates that the cost of Hospital Insurance alone (Part A of Medicare) will rise from 2.6 percent to 11.1 percent of payroll. Yet this projection is a mere tip of the iceberg, since it assumes (what has already been happening since 1983) that prospective payment regulation will push the high cost-growth items into Supplementary Medical Insurance (Part B of Medicare), which is three-quarters funded out of general federal revenues. How fast will Part B grow? Here there are no estimates, though one unofficial projection by the Health Care Financing Administration (HFCA) says that Part B, which is now two-thirds the size of Part A, will already be *double* the size of Part A by the year (yes, you guessed it) 2007.

We have not yet talked about the ballooning cost of Medicare copayments and deductibles, as yet paid out of pocket by beneficiaries. Nor about the number of nursing home beds, which will quadruple over the next forty years—adding another 6 percent of payroll to total spending. But even ruling these out, since we don't yet know the extent to which public budgets will cover them, it's easy to see how current-law health benefits could cost 20 percent to 30 percent of payroll forty years from now. Adding them to cash benefits, the total public transfer burden of aging will reach 50 percent to 60 percent of payroll, and this is before any other taxes. Just to mention such an absurd figure is to conclude, of course, that we will drastically change the system between now and then. Yet this conclusion is itself a prediction, and it begs the question of just how and when we will change it.

In 2007—to return to the year in question—most of this spiraling cost scenario will lie in the twenty years ahead of us. The burden of cash benefits will still be only slightly higher than it is today. Faster-growing health-care benefits, however, will already have plagued us with many a fiscal crisis, and I suspect that Congress in the meantime will have traded sporadic cost-control with benefit expansion, leaving the overall spending path little changed. By 1988 or 1989, for instance, Congress will pass a "catastrophic" Medicare package to cover more of the out-of-pocket costs of beneficiaries. In the early 1990s, it will be forced to construct a prospective payment scheme for doctors under Part B; but it will come back in the mid-1990s with a nursing-care benefit. By the late 1990s, it will have to do something to save the Part A trust fund (now scheduled to go bankrupt around the year 2000); but again it will come back several years later with a bailout for private-sector retirement health-care programs (whose unfunded liabilities are now estimated in the $1 trillion range).

The media in 2007 will be full of editorial debate on such issues. We will be sick of hearing about the never-ending health-care "crisis," but the issue just won't quit. If current HCFA projections are on track, total U.S. health-care spending (now about 11 percent of GNP, up from 6 percent in 1967) will pass 15 percent of GNP by the year 2000 and by 2007 will be closing in on 17 percent of GNP. The health-care industry itself will be gargantuan: several times larger than defense; bigger than farming, energy, utilities, transportation, and construction combined.

As for Social Security cash benefits, the idea that we can live off our "trust fund" surplus will by then be recognized as a cruel joke. Since such surpluses will be entirely invested in Treasury debt—and will, for the past twenty years, have merely relieved the



federal budget from even greater deficits—any attempt by the Social Security Administration to cash in its paper will force the Treasury to raise taxes to cover the cost. Our Social Security trust-fund mountain will only have one effect: to push the rising cost burden from payroll taxes to income taxes once the system begins its deficit crash just five years later (in the year 2012).

The year 2007, in short, will find the enormous Baby Boom perched on the edge of retirement and staring into a bottomless abyss of dependency costs. As a generation unreputed for its foresight, the Boomers may be waking up to the prospect for the first time. And as a generation whose household savings rate has not, thus far, matched that of its parents, it may also be finding the responsible options—much later retirement and benefit cuts—most unpalatable. Indeed, the Boomers will already be grousing about the one-year increase in the Social Security retirement age (now scheduled to go completely into effect by 2008). Most middle-aged Boomers will still have two living parents in retirement; more, in fact, will have a grandparent still alive than a child still rooming at home. Letting taxes rise for younger workers, therefore, may seem to be a less visible evil than cutting their parents' benefits. Perhaps not. Yet the only way the Baby Boom can both grandfather its parents and hold harmless its children is to shoulder the full burden itself.

Much will depend on whether birthrates exceed or fall short of our projections over the next twenty years, since these births will determine the rate at which new workers are entering the labor force during the same period (2007-2027) in which the Baby Boomers are exiting. Much will also depend on the health-care benefit reforms that we enact during the 1990s. Yet it is likely that the most important choices—social as well as political—will still await this mammoth generation in the year 2007. Will the Boomers confront demographic reality by forging a new vision of aging as a period of productivity and contributory wisdom and experience past age 65? Or will they hunker down to protect the right—a right which only a youthful society can afford—to spend the last quarter of their lives in detached and publicly subsidized leisure?

The choices made will not only influence the economic cost of aging; they will ultimately influence the shape of the family as an institution and the direction of our fertility rate. A policy which socializes the cost of aging while keeping private the cost of raising children ultimately makes every childless citizen a free-rider. Today we can only hypothesize whether such a policy tends to weaken one of the strongest age-old incentives to have kids, familial security in old age. By the year 2007, however, the tendency may become obvious—for by then every couple of childbearing age will face a far more acute choice: whether to raise a child who may need expensive preparation and financial assistance well into adulthood against mounting tax rates, or whether to forgo the travail at little personal cost. We can easily imagine the Thirteenth generation—at the peak of their child-bearing years in 2007—waiting attentively for their Boomer elders to make up their mind on the direction of policy. And as the Baby Boom chooses, so will the Thirteenth act.

**Over the past twenty years, America has been overtaken by two demographic revolutions, and neither shows signs of abating any time soon.**

That the choice will be the Boomers' to make there can be no doubt. The Baby Boom will dominate the electorate in 2007. Their large numbers—combined with the very high voter participation rates typical of middle age—promise by then to make their vote an overwhelming electoral force. In the presidential election of 1984, the 40-to-65 age bracket constituted some 36 percent of the electorate. In the '08 presidential campaign (the one we'll be warming up for in 2007), this bracket will provide about 54 percent of the electorate; in the off-year election of 2010, when younger Americans tend to have better things to do than vote, it will provide a stunning 60 percent of the electorate. Never before and never again (or, if ever, not at least until the late twenty-first century) will the middle-aged pull of the lever so dominate our vox populi. Nor, perhaps, will any of the colorful choices already made by the Boomers quite match this one in importance.

**Deficits versus the Prosperity Illusion**

Future demographic trends and current benefit habits virtually guarantee an accelerating growth in resource transfers to older generations over the next forty years. How will younger Americans—the Thirteenth generation in particular—be able to afford this increase without a sizable decline in their standard of living? In the past, our answer to such a question was simple: the way we afford any growth in our dependency burden is by generating even greater increases in goods and services produced per worker. By splitting our "productivity dividend" between the private and public sector—or more precisely (in this case) between working and nonworking generations—everyone can emerge a consumption winner. A hard look at the current direction of our economy, however, is enough to tell us that this method is no longer viable.

The most important reason for this gloomy prognosis is, quite simply, that productivity growth in the U.S. is stagnating. The per-worker output growth we now generate annually (about 0.6 percent in the 1970s and 0.4 percent in the 1980s) is only a small fraction of what it was during the earlier postwar era (2.9 percent in the 1950s and 1.9 percent in the 1960s). At the 1950s growth rate—just to illustrate the difference—real national income per worker doubles in only twenty-five years; at the 1980s growth rate, on the other hand, it doubles in 175 years. If we imagine thirty years, starting now, at the former growth rate, we would end up with an extra $35,000 per year per U.S. employed person to divvy up by the year 2017. At the 1980s growth rate, which seems far more likely, we would end up with only $4,500 extra per worker.

But fading growth rates are by no means our only economic obstacle. It is also becoming apparent that most, if not all, of the modest productivity growth we generate over the next decade will not get translated into consumption growth. Instead, it must be dedicated to the reconstruction of our collapsing foreign and domestic investment balances—or, to put it more simply, it must all go into exports, into private-sector plant and equipment, and into public-sector R & D and construction. Allowing production to "catch up" with consumption is the inevitable sequel to two decades of public policy tilted ever more steeply toward demand-side stimulus.

To say that the U.S. is going to redirect its production toward unrequited exports—or more strongly, that the U.S. will necessarily become a net exporter—is not interpretation, but a matter of arithmethic. It follows from the fact that we have become a net debtor of growing proportions (by the end of this year, we'll hit minus $400 billion). Since our indebtedness cannot grow indefinitely as a share of our GNP—beyond some point, foreigners will regard us as a prohibitive credit risk—our current-account deficit (i.e., our net foreign borrowing) must eventually decline to nearly zero. And when that happens, we will have to export more than we import just to service our debts. When will it happen? It's fair to conclude that once our debt approaches $1.5 trillion by the mid-1990s, rising interest rates, a falling dollar (or, perhaps, a global crash) will push us painfully to a trade surplus no later than the year 2000.

To say that the U.S. is going to redirect its production toward investment does require interpretation. But the interpretation is not very controversial if we expect to close the trade gap by expanding our manufactured exports and at the same time to improve productivity even moderately. Despite the growth in borrowing from abroad (an estimated 3.5 percent of GNP in 1987), the U.S. net investment rate, at 5.3 percent of GNP over the 1980s, ranks near the very bottom of the industrial world: only one-half the average rate for all other developed countries (10.8 percent) and one-third the rate for Japan (16.1 percent). The gap in public-sector investment is even wider. The U.S. is the only industrial country in which the per-worker net stock of public works is actually declining. This is why our bridges collapse, our trains chug slowly, and our firms are now bidding for European and Soviet rockets to take their payloads into space.

Just consider a few of the numbers. Putting an end to capital inflows from abroad will force us to substitute our own production for the $1,300 per fully-employed American that we are now borrowing each year from foreigners; restoring our anemic rate of net business investment here at home to what it was in the late 1970s (it is now at its lowest rate since the Great Depression) will cost us another $700 per worker. Altogether, we thus have to find an extra $2,000 in unconsumed real output per worker. Twenty years ago, we could have managed this task with four or five years of fast economic growth and modest consumer belt-tightening. Yet at our current productivity growth rate—with net output per worker rising by less than $150 each year—the arithmetic hardly justifies optimism, even if we allow no growth at all in per-worker consumption for more than a decade.

It is more likely that we will see an absolute decline in our consumption living standards, perhaps by as much as $100 to $150 yearly per worker, for many years to come. Part of the decline may take the form of higher household savings rates; most, undoubtedly, will take the form of increased taxes, reduced public spending, and an erosion in the real value of personal income due to swifter inflation (which in turn will be led by higher import prices). Neither the public nor our politicians are yet facing this prospect. By comparison, during the 1970s—a decade now known to most of us as "hard times"—U.S. consumption per worker nonetheless rose by $200 per year in real terms.

It might be argued, plausibly, that economic savings is not the most important vehicle by which we endow our future with higher living standards. "Smokestack" capital, we often hear, is overrated: what is more important is the human capital we endow to our children. Yet clearly this is where we are experiencing our biggest failure—at least by any objective measure. The past two decades have seen a visible weakening in every type of security and nurturing—economic, familial, and emotional—once considered necessary for a child's development. Not surprisingly, when we talk about children today we refer to a laundry-list of pathologies as diverse as the hardships they suffer: not just to the problems of uninspired teachers and rising poverty rates, but to problems of suicide, drugs, "latchkey kids," abuse, teenage pregnancy, absent fathers, emotional depression, inadequate discipline, and inner-city welfare dependency.

This is especially true when we talk about minority children, who—due to immigration and the racial differential in fertility rates—will constitute over 30 percent of all young adults entering the labor force by 2007, and well over 40 percent by 2027. Today, more than 40 percent of black and Hispanic children live in poverty; 60 percent of black children live in broken homes; and last year 75 percent of all black infants were born to unwed mothers (of these, half were to teenagers). We must, to be sure, be respectful of the natural pluck and energy of children; perhaps our Thirteenth generation can overcome the handicaps we have left with them, especially since they are already turning out to be (quite unlike the better-endowed Baby Boom) a group of waste-no-time career strivers. Yet it's clear that if they succeed, it will be despite their elders rather than because of them.

No one can say, of course, just where this leaves us economically by the year 2007. My own suspicion is that, over the next five years, America's greatest struggle will be to extricate itself from our growing foreign indebtedness—a process which currently requires that we "export" IOUs equivalent to one percent of our national net worth each year in return for foreign savings. Before we escape it completely, it is likely we will suffer a serious recession sometime in the early- to mid-1990s. One hopes that, without lasting damage, we will emerge a net exporter. By the mid- to late-1990s, we will therefore be free to pursue our next agenda: raising our domestic investment rate to levels comparable with other industrial countries. Accomplishing this task will take us nearly to the year 2007, one of the last comfortable years we will be able to enjoy before the unrelenting gale winds of demography rip over us. Over the previous two decades, most Americans will have produced considerably more than they will have consumed—a fitting regimen, perhaps, for the traumatic adjustments that yet await us.

We would like to believe that this is all just a "worst-case" scenario. But it is not. It is one of the best scenarios—based, for instance, on the premise that we take immediate and decisive action to reduce our budget deficit, raise domestic investment, and expand sales of manufactured exports at a record pace for many years. It is also based on the smooth and enthusiastic cooperation of our trading partners, no sharp rise in the price of our oil imports, no widespread default by debtor countries, and, of course, no major war. A much worse scenario would assume, on the other hand, that one or more of these conditions do not hold, in which case the Baby Boom is bound to feel all the more disillusioned and all the less generous by the time it receives its last paycheck.

It is hard to overemphasize the key role the Baby Boom's retirement will play in shaping policy in the year 2007. If the cost of investing in our children and our economy seems onerous to our society today and for the next twenty years, when a "boom" generation is working and a "bust" generation is retiring, we can only imagine how unaffordable it will seem thirty years from now when the situation is reversed. Let us be forewarned: the Boomers will realize that sacrificial altruism will not be their only option in the year 2007. The alternative will be to protect the economic expectations of older age groups—their illusions of prosperity—by forcing the full burden of our insufficient productivity growth to fall on the backs of younger age groups. This alternative, unfortunately, can only work for those already alive and mature. It would set up all future generations for a vicious circle of declining opportunities: poorer young families, which means still fewer and less productive children, which darkens still further the prospects for workers and retirees alike by early next century.

No one wants such a future, yet the trends are already ominous. Consider, for instance, how the dramatic slowdown in overall living-standard growth since 1973 has masked a vast disparity in the trends for different age groups. The elderly, at one extreme, have hardly been affected—thanks, in part, to an extraordinary growth in federal benefit income over the past two decades (now making up nearly 60 percent of all federal benefits, or an average of $12,500 per elderly household). Their average real household net worth and after-tax per-capita income (now the highest of any age group) are still climbing vigorously; their poverty rate (now the lowest of any age group) is still falling.

Working-age adults, in turn, have done less well—with the incomes of older adults (age 45 to 65) just keeping up with inflation and the incomes of younger workers (age 25 to 45) falling far behind inflation. During the 1980s, younger workers have experienced declining rates of home ownership, rising rates of poverty and low-wage service employment, and increasing income discrimination due to "two-tier" contracts. And, this is despite the massive shift of young mothers from the household economy to the market economy. The advantages of the shift have already shown up in the GNP; the disadvantages have yet to be witnessed, but may include children ill-equipped in character and learning for the much-heralded "information economy" that some experts say is bound to usher us comfortably into the twenty-first century.

It is hard to overlook the parallel between our demographic and economic direction. Obsessed with youth, Americans act like a young nation when we are in fact aging rapidly—a misperception which may yet accelerate aging. Likewise, obsessed with a self-image of prosperity, America acts like a thriving nation when the fundamentals of economic growth have in fact stagnated—a misperception which has induced massive borrowing against the future. By the year 2007 we will realize that whatever is available for consumption tomorrow must be produced tomorrow. Nothing we do today can change that equation except by creating more producers, or by dedicating resources—in the form of human and physical capital—toward easing their productive task. What we hope, surely, is that the realization does not come too late.

"The prophesying business," wrote H. L. Mencken, "is like writing fugues; it is fatal to everyone save the man of absolute genius." That depends, of course, on what we are trying to prophesy. Here, I have been sketching out the certain or highly-probable constraints which demographics and economics will impose on our future. No one can foretell, on the one hand, exogenous "surprise" events that will improve or worsen this scenario or, on the other, which way America will respond to these constraints. The outcome, therefore, remains a question-mark. What we can foretell, however, is that Americans will have to face these constraints and ultimately will have to make momentous and perhaps irreversible choices about their national destiny. This alone will change America's mood, its politics, and its culture.

It is possible that the Baby Boom, at the middle-aged crest of its political influence, will turn out to be a principled and self-confident generation—ready to confront big issues and, if necessary, make sacrifices. The danger lies in the nature of the choices the Boomers will have to confront, choices involving aging, death, and economic self-denial. These are hardly the sorts of issues their Woodstock rite of passage has prepared them for. Likewise, it is good that the Thirteenth generation is just the type for working, saving, and striving. If ever we needed an ample supply of Horatio Algers (and even a few bridge-building robber barons), 2007 will be the time. One hopes that the Baby Boom, as it grows older, may provide comfort to the Thirteenth by shifting roles and serving as its moral anchor, a living repository of memories of a stabler and more confident era—much as Gertrude Stein was able to comfort the rootless luminaries of the Lost Generation. In that case, visions of apocalypse are the last thing the Boomers will want to mention about the year 1967. ☐

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# LET'S BE HONEST ABOUT VIETNAM

If we are to have a foreign policy, liberals and conservatives cannot go on politicizing the war, crying "No more Vietnams!" and hiding behind the Paris Peace Accords.

Was the Vietnam war a crime, a mistake, or—as President Reagan has said—"a noble cause"? If it was an effort of which Americans can be proud, then why is it that we did not prevail, or in the end, even wish to? If it was a mistake, was it wrong because it was immoral in its purposes, or merely in execution? If the United States erred in Vietnam, when precisely did it cross the line that sent it down "the slippery slope"? If the original purposes of American intervention were sound, when did conditions make those purposes unacceptable? And finally, what are the lessons to be learned from the greatest American tragedy since the Civil War?

In the more than ten years since the fall of Saigon, hundreds of books and articles—and an apparently endless succession of motion pictures—dealing with various aspects of the war have appeared, and there is no sign that public curiosity (or passion) has been abated. Instead, it continues to be one of the most explosive themes in the national debate over foreign policy and, also, over the country's basic nature and purposes. Almost nothing about the war, including the shape of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial on the Mall in Washington, is free of controversy.

Unfortunately, as a topic the war continues to generate more heat than light. This is certainly not from lack of material: it is simply that the vast outpouring of scholarship has been largely ignored by both liberals and conservatives, who continue to use the war for their own purposes. Thus in spite of the incalculable price that America paid for the loss of its international innocence, our Vietnam experience is still not terribly useful to us. In fact, until we address its central questions, it is unlikely to become so. And as long as *that* condition persists, the United States will not possess the moral resources to pursue a foreign policy, in Central America, the Persian Gulf, or anywhere else.

## II

The term "historiography" applies to the particular interpretations scholars bring to bear in their recounting of past events. As normally practiced by academic historians, it is a harmless shell game for the delectation of specialists. But in the case of Vietnam, it refers not merely to the particular way that specialists construe their materials, but to deeply held convictions by members of the political, academic, and media elites who shape our attitudes and also, eventually, our policies.

It is perhaps a bit much to call the latter "schools" of historical interpretation—they are, rather, *notions* of what happened in Vietnam, falling rather conveniently into two large and variegated boxes. One, cherished by people who think of themselves as liberals, emphasizes the mendacity of the U.S. government and military authorities, in both the inception and continuing conduct of the war; the atrocities committed by American troops in the field; the horrendous impact of the war upon those who fought it; and the decadence of the South Vietnamese government and people, who, in spite of the vast resources transferred to them over many years, collapsed within a few days in the early spring of 1975.

Often argued in the white heat of righteous indignation, this interpretation loses much of its moral grandeur in the light of events in Southeast Asia since the war—the Viet Cong turned out to be just what the Johnson and Nixon administrations always said they were, namely, puppets of the North Vietnamese. And the political order that Hanoi has imposed not only on Vietnam but on Cambodia—where one-fourth of the population was liquidated—raises serious doubts whether "our side" was really as "bad" as often represented during years of direct American involvement. Liberals feel uncomfortable with this point because once conceded, the case for non-involvement (or withdrawal) must then be made on pragmatic rather than moral grounds, where it is far more difficult to determine what course should have been taken, and when.

The conservative approach emphasizes the basic decency of American purposes, but also the fundamental soundness of our strategy. In its purest form, it argues that U.S. policy had turned something of a corner somewhere between 1968 and 1973, but that Congress, the media, and the American public abandoned their government and thus, in the lapidary phrase of Richard Nixon, "seized defeat from the jaws of victory." In effect, it reverses the liberal argument—instead of the government being at fault, the failure lies with the American people and its representatives. This approach, too, has its problems, since those who take it must demonstrate that at some point the war was "winnable," at any rate at a price the American people could reasonably be expected to pay. Given the terms upon which we had determined to fight the war, the price would have had to exceed the more than 50,000 lives and the $300 billion that were expended. So far this task has eluded all commentators, including, obviously, Nixon himself, but also his co-architect of the policy, Henry Kissinger.

Presumably some sort of synthesis might eventually be possible. One worthy first attempt was made nearly ten years ago by Guenter Lewy in his pathbreaking study *America in Vietnam.*[1] According to Lewy, the U.S. strategy was fundamentally flawed up to 1968, so long as MACV Commander General William Westmoreland insisted the war be fought along conventional lines he knew from World War II; the war, in effect, became one of attrition,

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in which thousands of young American men were sacrificed to no evident territorial or military end. When General Creighton Abrams replaced Westmoreland in 1968, the U.S. expeditionary force finally began to fight the kind of war that guerrilla tactics and the local situation required, and successfully so. But by then the White House had spent whatever political capital remained for its objectives in Southeast Asia, leaving it with no possibility of staying the course long enough to be effective.

Lewy's is a history without heroes or villains—except possibly Westmoreland. It does not attempt to deal with a number of other issues, such as whether Southeast Asia was worth the strategic costs the U.S. was initially willing to face; whether the South Vietnamese government and army were capable of using the massive aid they received; and whether, even if Abrams (or some other field commander) had been in charge from 1965-68, the U.S. could have sustained sufficient support at home to carry the enterprise to its successful completion.[2] Nor does it examine the alternative strategies that were never tried. But this is asking Lewy to accomplish something he did not set out to do; that task, immense as it is, must be left to other historians.

Two recent books, C. L. Sulzberger's *The World and Richard Nixon*[3] and Kim Willenson's *The Bad War*,[4] illustrate the distance we have yet to travel to reach historiographical consensus. Sulzberger's book is essentially an apologia for the statesmanship of Richard Nixon, restating what the former President and Kissinger have said themselves in their own memoirs, or told the author in private interviews. It is rambling, discursive, repetitious—and unpersuasive. After spending over 200 pages making Nixon's case, even Sulzberger expresses serious doubts.

**What are the lessons to be learned from the greatest American tragedy since the Civil War?**

The Willenson volume is far more interesting, precisely because it is not a standard narrative but rather an "oral history," that is a collection of interviews he and a team of *Newsweek* journalists conducted for a special issue of the magazine on the tenth anniversary of the fall of Saigon. Most of the book consists of materials for which there was no space in the magazine—remarks of dozens of people who participated in the war at every level and in a variety of venues, including that of the Viet Cong, often running several pages in length, and punctuated by sharp and carefully focused questions.

Readers should be forewarned that Willenson uninhibitedly brandishes all of the conventional prejudices of a *Newsweek-Washington Post* journalist, almost to the point of caricature. He shares all the received liberal notions about the war, remarkably unrevised by the revelations and scholarship of recent years. He is, in fact, what one might call an unreconstructed dove, using the Vietnam experience to support, broadly speaking, a leftist-pacifist view of American foreign policy, a kind of homegrown version of nonalignment. Thus he somewhat gratuitously concludes the introduction by insisting that current U.S. policy in Central America "sound[s] distressingly like many of the same foolish errors that bedeviled us in Indochina," and he takes the Congress to task for "refusing to commit [itself] to putting a final end to the effort" there—referring to U.S. aid to the Nicaraguan resistance. For him, then, Vietnam is above all a historical metaphor to be used to prevent the United States from opposing Communism anywhere in the Third World, even places uncomfortably close to home.

*The Bad War* is also a deeply personal book—an angry counter-salvo against what Willenson calls the "revisionist hawks" whom he somehow imagines are in the ascendancy these days, and need to be beaten back with the testimony of "people who actually participated in the event." Since he never explicitly identifies who these "revisionist hawks" are, much less presents their arguments, the debate is curiously one-sided. Fortunately, the interviews themselves by no means always underpin Willenson's views. Indeed, they often sharply contradict them. The reason is simple: we hear not only from Joan Baez and George Ball, Eugene McCarthy and William Fulbright, Gary Hart and Walter Cronkite, but also from Les Aspin and William Colby, Nguyen Cao Ky and Maj. Gen. George S. Patton III, Walt Rostow and James Schlesinger, and disabled veterans like Ken Berez and Bobby Muller. This is not history, but the raw data of history, which can be used for many different purposes, not merely the one the editor intends.

The appearance of two new books by Vietnamese authors—*The Palace File*[5] and *In the Jaws of History*[6]—adds to the discussion by reminding us of the context in which U.S. policy was enacted—in a foreign country with its own traditions and special problems, however little Americans were disposed to take notice of them. *In the Jaws of History* is of particular interest because its author, Bui Diem, not only served as South Vietnamese ambassador to Washington from 1966 to 1972, but had been, as a veteran democratic nationalist, *chef de cabinet* in the government of Phan Huy Quat (1964-65). Though short-lived and little remembered, Quat's administration represented the best of non-Communist Vietnam; unfortunately, it proved a brief punctuation mark between the authoritarian Ngo Dinh Diem and various power-hungry colonels and crazy "flyboys."

Above all, Bui Diem provides an almost unprecedented view of the U.S.-Vietnamese relationship. He reveals, for example, that he, Quat, their colleagues, as well as the U.S. Embassy (including Ambassador Maxwell Taylor), all keenly sensitive to the French experience in Indochina, emphatically *opposed* the introduction of U.S. ground troops in South Vietnam. In the end, however, they were simply overruled by the Pentagon and General Westmoreland, both oblivious to historical and political context and hell-bent on their own agendas. Thus the South Vietnamese government, which was advertised to the world as "requesting" U.S. combat troops, learned about the first landings at Da Nang in 1965 *after the event*. It was symptomatic of a qualitative change in alliance: before Quat knew what was happening, there were 200,000 American troops wreaking havoc in the countryside, dislocating the economy, and above all, relieving the South Vietnamese government and its army of any sense of responsibility for their own destiny.

### III

President Lyndon Johnson's decision to make the war an American conflict was based on his conviction that there were but two choices left him by early 1965—to escalate or to withdraw altogether and allow the South Vietnamese government to collapse. If that was so—and if Bui Diem is right, it may not have been—we are still left to ask why, given those premises, Johnson chose as he did. The best answer—and one that illuminates LBJ's devious personality—is that he really didn't choose at all. Rather than put the country on serious war footing, which would require sacrifice of his cherished Great Society programs, and, also, run the risk of Chinese intervention, Johnson opted to pretend that Vietnam could be managed at a relatively low level of commitment. This explains the "incrementalist" approach to escalation—the assumption being that, at some unknown point, the North Vietnamese would recognize they were paying too great a price for their aggression in the South and would either sue for peace or, in the counterinsurgency language then in vogue, simply "fade away." No doubt Johnson expected that this would come fairly early on; when it did not, he had no choice but to increase the number of men in the field, hoping each time that the latest installment would prove the last. The possibility that *no* price could be too high for the North Vietnamese did not occur to him, for the obvious reason that the alternative—ignominious withdrawal—was, to him, frankly unthinkable.

Johnson's "strategy" ran directly counter to all of the best advice he received from his service chiefs, who opposed his incrementalist approach from the very start. In fact, General Bruce Palmer reveals in *The Bad War* that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were "very close to resigning en masse" in the fall of 1967, and were talked out of it only by the entreaties of General Earle Wheeler, then JCS chairman.

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[1] The Lewy book, which was regarded at the time of its publication as excessively "revisionist," nonetheless shows signs of percolating into the mainstream interpretation. Thus today nobody questions Lewy's finding that the North Vietnamese decided as early as December 1963 to escalate by sending regular units into South Vietnam, and thanks to his careful investigation of some of the more sensational atrocity charges, liberal critics have even retreated from some of the more extravagant charges of U.S. "war crimes." The Lewy book did, in fact, seriously damage the credibility of many "peace" organizations like the American Friends Service Committee, journalists like Harrison Salisbury, and academics like Richard Falk, by taking seriously their charges and carefully investigating them in the light of fullest evidence, often declassified under the Freedom of Information Act.

[2] After all, even the Korean War, which seems in retrospect to have been far less divisive at home, was nonetheless intensely unpopular in the United States by early 1953. Had President Eisenhower persisted in the same policies as President Truman, rather than signing what was in effect a compromise truce, he might have experienced some of the same unpleasantries that marked the presidency of Richard Nixon. But, of course, Eisenhower had the advantage of inheriting a war of territory, where it was possible to conclude an enforceable division of Korea into Communist and non-Communist sectors.

[3] Prentice-Hall, $18.95.

[4] New American Library/Newsweek Books, $27.95. All unattributed quotes that subsequently appear are from this book.

[5] By Nguyen Tien Hung and Jerrold L. Schecter, Harper & Row, $22.95.

[6] By Bui Diem with David Chanoff, Houghton Mifflin, $18.95.

This led to a situation, as Colonel Herbert Schandler has recalled in *Vietnam as History* (1984), a collection edited by Peter Braestrup, whereby every six months

> the President would go to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and ask, "How can we make greater progress in Vietnam?" and they would say, "Mine Haiphong, bomb Hanoi, invade Laos, invade Cambodia, and mobilize the reserves." And the President would say, "We're not going to do that, but within these constraints, how can we achieve greater success?" And they'd say, "Give the Air Force more targets, and give the Army some more men, and the Marines some more, and the Navy a little more, and everything will be all right." After four or five reiterations of this, if I were the President, I'd say, "Listen, guys, you don't get the message." Or if I were the Joint Chiefs, I'd come to the President and say, "We can't do it. You're asking us to do an impossible thing." So the policy was never translated into strategy.

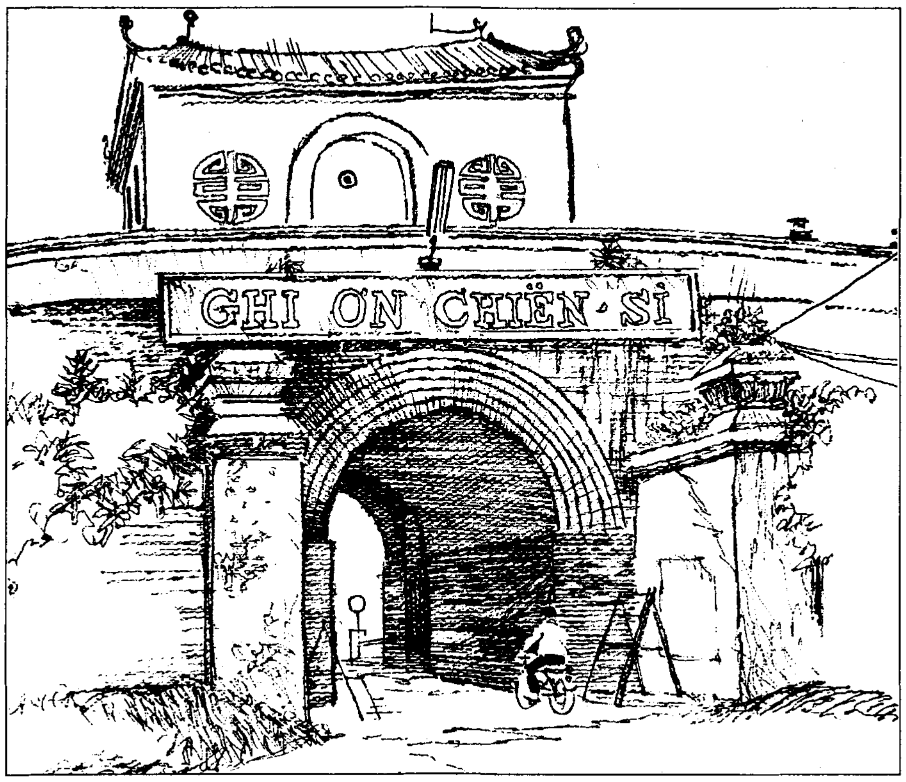
When in the summer of 1965 it became clear that Johnson was sacrificing military strategy to the exigencies—as he understood them—of domestic politics, Army Chief of Staff General Harold K. Johnson, backed by Ambassador Taylor, recommended an "enclave strategy," in which U.S. troops would secure South Vietnam's key coastal cities and ports; this would guarantee that the enemy could never fully overrun the country, cluster the U.S. military presence at points of maximum advantage, free the South Vietnamese army to do combat in the field, and even minimize the political fallout at home, since it was not anticipated that the American troops would engage in counterinsurgency operations except in their own local defense. General Johnson's proposal was scotched by General Westmoreland, who had no taste for such defensive measures. As Colonel Schandler has written,

> Under Westmoreland's plan of action, U.S. forces could gain and maintain the tactical initiative in South Vietnam through their great mobility and firepower, but the enemy always maintained the strategic initiative by his ability and willingness to increase his commitment of forces, via the Ho Chi Minh trail, to the struggle.
>
> Thus the pace and level of the fighting would be dictated by Hanoi, using the Laos and Cambodian sanctuaries, and not by the United States and the Republic of Vietnam. The size of U.S. forces required to defeat the enemy depended entirely on the enemy's response to the U.S. build-up and his willingness to increase his commitment to the struggle. . . . For the United States, it was necessary to kill the enemy even faster than he could supply replacements via the sanctuaries. . . .
>
> The war became a protracted war of attrition. If he were willing to pay the price, the enemy could keep American forces tied up indefinitely. As it turned out, Hanoi was able and willing to pay a very high price.

"The strategy of fighting defensively in South Vietnam and putting pressure on the North instead of physically cutting off their route of infiltration," General Bruce Palmer told Willenson, "would have taken all of the armies in the world. . . . Our decision [instead] was to let them come down to us. Well, we were dancing to their tune." Apparently this so troubled General Johnson that he told Palmer before he died that "his real regret . . . was that he hadn't turned in his commission."

Of course, no one can know for certain exactly what would have happened if the Joint Chiefs' advice had been followed in 1965. It is just possible—although, really, no more than that—that a strategy of total mobilization, hot pursuit, and perhaps even a land invasion of North Vietnam would have worked, assuming that it did not provoke Chinese intervention, and also that public support for the war fought under such circumstances could be sustained long enough to achieve our purposes. So many "ifs" leap off the page that one has to draw a very deep breath before seriously considering the hypothesis; nonetheless, the debate would be more useful if liberals would not refuse to engage with it. Unfortunately, conservatives weaken their own brief to the extent that they continue to rest their case on the feasibility of the Paris Peace Accords. We thus end up debating the virtues of a strategy that failed, rather than the possibilities of one that might have succeeded. Of course, it is also possible that Bui Diem is right, and that it would have been best for the U.S. to have avoided a direct combat role altogether, confining ourselves to providing heavy logistical support to the South Vietnamese army. It would have been less costly to us in lives, treasure, and self-respect, and even if it had failed, it would have produced a result no worse than the one that finally obtained.

**Thus the South Vietnamese government, which was advertised to the world as "requesting" U.S. combat troops, learned about the first landings at Da Nang in 1965 *after* the event.**



IV

During the months and years that the war dominated public debate in the United States, both Presidents Johnson and Nixon continually warned the American people that in Vietnam their credibility as an ally was at stake—that they could not abandon the people of South Vietnam without undermining America's relationship with its friends around the world. Yet by the time the United States finally did withdraw from Southeast Asia, America's contempt for its erstwhile ally there far exceeded any emotions we might have harbored toward the enemy—if anything, the sympathies ran in the other direction. "I . . . came to have an abiding respect for the VC and the North Vietnamese," journalist Leon Daniel recalls. "You'd see those bodies stacked up and you'd see prisoners who stayed in the jungle after they were jaundice yellow. . . . You couldn't help but admire their courage." Contrast that with the memory of Bobby Muller, a former Marine lieutenant now confined to a wheelchair: "The ARVN didn't want to hear about fighting. It was LaLa land. Every, every, every, *every* firefight we got into, the ARVN broke, the ARVN f-----g ran. I was with three different battalions, and the story never changed." These sentiments reached their most graphic expression in a newspaper cartoon by Oliphant the week Saigon fell; it showed a group of former Vietnamese collaborators filing past the Statue of Liberty—represented entirely as dope dealers or prostitutes, declaring "Everything free in America!"

Did the South Vietnamese get in the end what they deserved? By that one means, were they unworthy—by their conduct on the battlefield and elsewhere—of the sacrifice made on their behalf by more than 50,000 Americans and their families? In view of all that South Vietnam has suffered since its fall, the question seems distasteful, and yet no serious discussion can really avoid it. The best that can be said at this point is that the evidence is mixed. Though deeply affected by the tragedy of his country, Ambassador Bui Diem does not sentimentalize: indeed, he better than anyone provides a vivid picture of an inchoate society rent with contradictions and corruption, though far less pernicious than its critics in the United States and elsewhere would have it.

He cannot forbear, however, from mentioning the immensely negative impact of the American Way of War on his own country's armed forces—the twin curse of a heavy logistical tail and massive firepower. "It was a style to which [the South Vietnamese Army] would become habituated in a short time, and that would prove disastrous to [it] when the Americans eventually withdrew their support." Diem reminds us, too, that there were many small, undramatic victories—military and political—that went unnoticed in the United States, both by critics of the war whose only interest was in finding a rationale for abandonment, and by gung-ho hawks, whose "take charge" attitude tended to push Diem's countrymen onto the sidelines, rather than encourage their independence.

From a purely military point of view, Allen E. Goodman contends in the Braestrup collection, many South Vietnamese units were good fighters, as proved in the aftermaths of the 1968 Tet and 1972 Easter offensives. In the latter, Goodman writes, "the tide of battle on the ground turned almost entirely on the action of the Vietnamese soldiers. . . . In contrast to the 'living room war' image of the South Vietnamese soldier as cowardly and bumbling, ARVN paid dearly—nearly 200,000 dead, plus half a million wounded." And what is perhaps more significant, in contrast to the Chinese Nationalists (1945-49), few ARVN individuals and no organized units went over to the enemy. But, he concludes, U.S. military strategy always envisioned the ARVN playing a subsidiary role. "If a victory ensued, the Americans received the credit. If the Viet Cong escaped, the ARVN was blamed for letting them get away."

This finding must be contrasted, however, not only against Bobby Muller's testimony, but against Bui Diem's own admission that in the South Vietnamese military President Thieu "sought loyalty above ability. As a result, the skill of junior officers and the courage of common soldiers were too often wasted, as were their lives, at the hands of unable or dishonest generals." General Bruce Palmer, for his part, points to the deep infiltration of the South Vietnamese command at all levels:

> It was disheartening to me to realize that the whole country had been penetrated, from the palace down to the platoons. The Vietnamese could not put out their orders the way we would. They did not trust their own chain of command. They wouldn't tell the troop commanders where they were going until the last minute. . . .
>
> We didn't really realize the extent of the subversion. . . . It was difficult for Americans to understand that kind of thinking. It seemed to me the Vietnamese could switch sides so easily.

Perhaps the most balanced assessment comes from Navy veteran Richard Armitage, now assistant secretary of defense, who "ended up feeling that some Vietnamese tried quite hard and gave the ultimate sacrifice, and others spent their time trying to get rich. . . . It wasn't a case of saying the Vietnamese did or didn't try hard enough; some did and some didn't. The fact is that South Vietnam and the United States lost their will together."

The U.S.-Vietnamese relationship was a very complicated one, and not merely at the military level. From the beginning of the Kennedy Administration there was considerable dispute about the quality of the leadership in Saigon, and throughout the summer of 1963 there was a running battle within the U.S. government over whether President Ngo Dinh Diem was unpopular and therefore should go, or whether, with all his faults, he was—as CIA Station Chief William Colby maintained—"provid[ing] a better government than anyone else would offer." As readers of the *Pentagon Papers* know, the CIA was eventually overruled by the State Department and the National Security Council, and Diem, along with several of his closest collaborators—some of whom happened, characteristically, to be his relatives—were murdered in a coup that at a minimum went forward with the wholehearted approval of the U.S. Embassy.[7] "During the entire period," Colby ruefully recalls, "I don't remember one sensible discussion as to who would succeed him."

The murder of Diem was a turning point in the bilateral relationship in two ways. On one hand, the United States took direct responsibility for the political as well as military direction of the South Vietnamese state—or, at any rate, was perceived to have done so. This placed upon Washington the peculiar burden of giving South Vietnam a government that was marginally respectable by Western standards—something which, in fact, it had never had. Elections for president, vice-president, and a national assembly were eventually held, and in its own rickety fashion the country managed to limp toward something vaguely resembling representative democracy, at the same time, naturally, giving fuller expression to the forces of dissensus. "You Americans came," General Tran Van Dong complains, "and told the Vietnamese that it was legal in the country to be against the policy of the government, that you can be in the opposition. The Communists used that to push the people to say and demand more. The Americans built a politically confused situation in South Vietnam."

Moreover, the U.S. penchant for involving itself so deeply in the internal affairs of the South Vietnamese state inevitably created a dependency mentality, characterized by the remark of a policeman to AID official Lionel Rosenblatt, "We could win this war. We are not a pro-Communist society, but why the hell can't you Americans give us a decent leader?" On the American side, it bred condescension. As Thomas Polgar, Colby's successor as CIA station chief puts it, South Vietnam was "a handicapped child, and once you have a handicapped child, no matter what you do, it ain't going to be normal." Maybe, he adds, "he will never be a professor or a senator, but you are plenty happy if he can make a living as a counterman."

Oddly enough, the relationship seems to have worked well enough for limited military purposes—as long as the U.S. was there. As AID official Charles Benoit put it, "[The South Vietnamese] believed the United States was invincible. And we were going to pull this out because we couldn't afford to lose." Polgar maintains that in 1972 ARVN morale was good "and they fought well and successfully because they knew the Americans were in it." But Nixon's decision to "Vietnamize" the war—a euphemism for gradual American withdrawal—was psychologically devastating. At the time many South Vietnamese told Douglas Pike, a leading academic analyst who spent several years in the country, that they could go it alone after 1974. "But in their heart of hearts, every man-jack of them knew or thought, 'We cannot do it alone.' . . . They did not run out of ammunition. They eventually would have . . . but the fact is that they had six billion dollars' worth of hardware left. So much that they're still using it in Cambodia."

It would appear, then, that *given the strategy President Johnson chose to follow*, the presence of American troops in South Vietnam was essential in preventing the military defeat of the Saigon government, even, perhaps, in motivating its troops to fight. What the American presence—even as it numbered half a million men—could not do was move beyond costly stalemate. If this is so, then all of the controversy over the failure of Congress to appropriate adequate resources to South Vietnam's survival in 1974-75 may be sadly irrelevant.

## V

One of the few points upon which all students of the war agree is that the turning point for the United States came with the 1968 Tet offensive. Although technically a military victory for the United States and the South Vietnamese—the enemy failed to capture and hold a single city, and suffered enormous losses—it was a psychological blow of devastating proportions, culminating in Lyndon Johnson's withdrawal from the presidential race. After March 1968, the issue was not whether the United States should persist, but when it would leave.

Thus with Tet an apparent disjunction between fact and perception had far-reaching consequences. These inevitably unleashed a nasty controversy over the role of the press in Vietnam, and particularly the electronic media, in the shaping (or misshaping) of U.S. perceptions of the war. One important landmark in the discussion was Peter Braestrup's *Big Story* (1983), which dealt with news coverage of the Tet offensive itself; another was an article in *Encounter* in August 1981, by Robert S. Elegant, entitled "Viet Nam: How to Lose a War." Some additional material in support of both sides appears in *The Bad War.*

Willenson's view, as expressed through Walter Cronkite, is that to claim that Tet was really an American victory masked by biased journalism is "an excessive rewrite of history." As Cronkite puts it, the problem was not "misreporting. Tet was the shock that it was because of the chain of events which had begun months before. The Tet offensive seemed to many people to prove that there was no way that the war was about to be won, that the end of the tunnel was in sight." In other words, the context was more important than the event, and the press cannot be faulted for operating within the same mind-set as the American public.

This is undoubtedly true as far as it goes. In fact, the perception of the press was fully shared by the highest circles of the U.S. government. The Tet offensive, Ambassador Robert Komer

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[7] As Ambassador Bui Diem puts it, while the coup itself was home-grown, "it would never have gone forward without American approval," both tacit and explicit.

recalls, "fatally weakened us at the center of our political structure. I mean, Washington panicked. LBJ panicked. Bus Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, panicked. *We* [in Vietnam] didn't panic, mainly because we were too goddamn busy." And he adds, "But after the first day we knew we were back on top." Perhaps so, but the damage had been done; things would never be the same. "Look," Defense Secretary Clark Clifford told Ambassador Bui Diem a few days after Tet, "we are sick to death. . . . Our people are discouraged and our support is limited."

Did the press, then, "lose" the war for the United States? It seems not, even if, as Elegant reminds us, Hanoi is perfectly willing to give the Western media a large share of the credit for its victory. Even the role of television in turning the American people against the war may have been vastly overstated.[8] A more important question is whether the press, and very specifically the American press, did a creditable and accurate job of reporting. That is far less apparent than Willenson would have it, and at a minimum, it must have had some effect on American perceptions of the war, however much or little. By focusing the controversy on Tet, some critics of the press may actually have misdirected their energies, for there are plenty of other areas where the fourth estate can be called to account.

As Peter Braestrup puts it in *The Bad War*, the press knew that "there was something wrong on the surface," but

> we're snatch-and-grabbit guys. The dogs have to bark for us to know what's going on. Then if we don't believe what we hear, we fish around for a critique. We're getting "both sides" of the story. When we're getting hosed down by the Administration on something, we're very sensitive to what looks like the contrary argument. But there may be more than one contrary argument, and there may be something that isn't being said at all that's fundamental. We missed that in Vietnam, often.

Braestrup also believes that insufficient attention was paid to "the other side," whose conduct could offer some hint of what life might be like in Vietnam in the event of its victory. "There were a lot of little massacres and assassinations, but we tended to believe it was selective terrorism. That was within the rules of the game, and corruption was not." To the press, Braestrup recalls, "the corrupt Thieu-Ky regime was no better than the guys who'd take over. It was a moral equivalence kind of thing. If anybody had said a million boat people, no one would ever have believed it."

Elegant's views are even harsher, and his conclusions overdrawn ("For the first time in modern history, the outcome of a war was determined not on the battlefield, but on the printed page, and above all, on the television screen"), but his arguments cannot simply be waved aside as right-wing media-bashing. In considerable detail he recounts outright media fabrications of events that never occurred, distortion of context, rigorously enforced journalistic "group-think," and the creation of journalistic "fronts" (Dispatch News Service) to disseminate disinformation.

Even in the unlikely event that all of Elegant's claims turned out to be false, the war still had an important effect on American journalism, one which Willenson passes over entirely—namely, the absorption of the fourth estate into the adversary culture. As a result, ever since—but particularly in Central America—the American press has been prone to assume the worst of its own government, and to give its enemies at least the benefit of the doubt. At worst, this is not merely a matter of an anti-establishment bias, but of downright hostility to one's own country and its institutions. "I have never seen a more hostile gathering of the press corps than that evening of the *Mayaguez* rescue," former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger recalls. "The press room over there, half those people, or at least half the vocal ones, were eager to see the United States lose, and they were frustrated and disappointed." While the proximate importance of media may have been exaggerated in the particular case of Vietnam, the enemies of the United States do not discount the potential of its evident cultural disaffection. Witness the way the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the Salvadoran guerrillas have cultivated the American media, and note also the recrudescence of the same kind of "resource centers" on Central America that once existed with regard to Indochina, often run by the same people.

## VI

If one crucial turning point in Vietnam was Johnson's decision to escalate in early 1965, the other was Nix-

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[8] As Lawrence W. Lichty has pointed out in *Vietnam as History*, this medium is very much a double-edged sword. Presidential appearances to speak about Vietnam tended to enhance the chief executive's support. More importantly, evidence shows that those sectors of the public whose opinions of U.S. involvement in Vietnam changed the most were those *least* reliant on television. "The gradual decline of support for the war occurred mostly among the young, well-educated people who could be categorized as 'managers,' college graduates, and 'strong Republicans'; people who were least likely to say that television was their most important source of news."

# AN ANTI-WAR MEMOIR

The year was 1968 and I dressed for my first anti-war march in a pink turtleneck shirt, mock-buckskin vest, two-pound wrought-iron peace medallion, blue jeans splotched with psychedelic patterns from a night in the sink with Clorox, and three different protest buttons: "McCarthy for President," "War is Not Healthy for Children and Other Living Things," and "Enough!" My outfit was made all the more asinine by the fact that I was 11 years old.

I had been an ardent liberal since the third grade. It was back then that my mother brought my attention to a letter to the editor written by my classmate Aaron Greenspan:

> I think it is wrong that some people have lots of extra money when children like Bunzu from Nigeria are so unfortunate. I only get $1.00 for my allowance, but from now on I am giving 10¢ every week to the human beings who are far less fortunate than I. After all, every life is precious.
>
> Sincerely,
> Aaron Greenspan
> Age 8

"Mrs. Greenspan was showing this to everybody at the beauty parlor," said my mother, who was sunning herself by the side of our swimming pool. "Would you like to write a letter too?"

I had just come home from school and was thinking about a snack and a swim.

"Why should I?" I asked.

"Like Aaron says . . . to help the unfortunate."

"Who are they?"

"People who can't afford nice things. For example, what's something you like that costs money?"

"Baseball cards," I said, sensing a big payoff. "You can get the whole new series in one big box."

"Then I'll make a deal," my mother said, rolling over to get sun on her back. "You write a letter like Aaron's, and you give 10¢ of your allowance to the unfortunate every week, and then I'll buy you a whole box of baseball cards."

"Where's a pencil and paper?" I asked.

And so I learned that liberals were the most admired people in the world, and that liberal opinions were the key to feeling good about oneself, saving the world, and winning valuable prizes. By the time I reached the fifth grade and my first protest march, I had earned a 10-speed bicycle and a stereo system in exchange for letters to large-circulation newspapers and national magazines on hunger in the Third World, riots in the inner cities, and, of course, the war in Vietnam.

These material accomplishments, however, seemed insignificant compared to the thrill of actually marching in protest against the war. We were going to chant and wave signs, just like on TV, while we paraded through the shopping district of our own Long Island suburb. Afterward, we would take further advantage of the lovely June Saturday by gathering in the park for a buffet lunch and a speech from our anti-war congressman, Allard Lowenstein.

As I came down the steps from my bedroom that morning, my excitement was so great that I barely had appetite for the bacon and eggs being prepared by Jacinta, our live-in Guatemalan housekeeper. My mother was already seated at the breakfast table, sipping coffee and reading *Women's Wear Daily*. She looked radiant and righteous in a long peasant skirt and denim work shirt with roses embroidered around the collar and down the sleeves, a single yellow "Enough!" button, and a small pink flower in her shining black hair. Joan Baez was barely audible from the living room stereo, singing about coal miners killed in an accidental explosion.

"You look sensational," my mother said. "Ready for an experience?"

"I'm feeling a little nauseous," I said.

"We're all excited," she said. "Dr. Finkelstein says we shouldn't confuse anxiety with excitement. Otherwise, we just notice the sunshine, instead of really feeling it on our faces."

"I guess I'll have an English muffin," I said.

Just then my father came into the breakfast room. He was looking more morose and overweight than usual, perhaps because he was stuffed into a thick turtleneck sweater a size too small.

"Don't you think it's a little warm for that Ogunquit lobsterman's sweater?" my mother asked.

"I don't have anything else back from the cleaners without French cuffs!" my father said, shouting as he was prone to do at unexpected times. "You're the one who said I shouldn't wear cuff links!"

*Jonathan Cohen is a science writer in Palo Alto, California.*

by Jonathan Cohen

"I think you're missing the whole spirit of doing your own thing," my mother said.

"How about a Lacoste?" he asked.

"This march is not about status symbols."

"To hell with it, I'm putting on a Lacoste," he said.

I was embarrassed for my father who caught a glint of discomfort in my eyes.

"Well, our letter writer looks ready," he said, smiling as he pulled the itchy turtleneck away from his throat. "Going to write up the march for *Rolling Stone*?"

"Maybe," I said, thinking that it would be nice to have a color television set in my room, instead of the little black and white portable that I had won for my A in Social Studies.

During the march past the Chinese restaurant, the boutiques, kosher butcher, the candy store, and the bakery, the liberal children and liberal parents stayed mostly in separate groups. There were about three thousand of us in all, our ranks stretching perhaps a half mile down the sidewalk. We kids did most of the hollering: "Hell no, we won't go!" "One-two-three-four, we don't want your dirty war!" "Hey-hey, LBJ, how many boys did you kill today!" When we passed the TV cameras, we waved our arms the way you do at the ballpark when a foul ball lands in your section. Otherwise, I was finding the long walk to be disappointing, anticlimactic. Except for the occasional TV crew or police officer leaning listlessly on a squad car, nobody was watching.

Then the mood of the marchers changed suddenly from boredom to apprehension. As we approached the entrance to the park where we planned to indulge in potato salad and Congressman Lowenstein, we met up with a gauntlet of counterprotestors. Fifty or sixty people were lined along the path that entered the park, waving American flags at us and shouting, "Traitors! Chickens! Hypocrites! Where would you all be if we hadn't stopped Hitler?" That remark came from Mr. Donnelly, the taxi driver, who was standing with Mr. Madonga, the school janitor, and Mr. Calvanico, the man who regularly cleaned our swimming pool. Here was the very small community of service workers and manual laborers who lived "on the wrong side of the tracks" in our suburb, economically and ideologically distant from our top crust of the middle class. I had always believed that these people loved and admired us.

They followed alongside us as we moved into the park, and I hurried forward to walk with my parents. My mother was grinning fiercely and offering the V-for-victory peace sign to an obese woman brandishing a framed photograph of a young man in a military uniform. My father was looking at the sky, his shoes, the tops of nearby trees. His eyes moved in every direction possible, it seemed, where he could avoid the stares of the people insulting him.

"Dad, what should we do?" I asked.

"Keep walking," he said.

"How come they're against us?"

He said, "Because they're morons."

I wasn't prepared for this answer; it seemed entirely incompatible with being liberal as I understood it at the time. How could poor people be good guys and morons at the same time? You didn't hear Joan Baez singing about dead morons in the coal mines. And why were we plodding along so meekly and quietly now, without any of the other side's anger and conviction? Weren't we the people who believed in the stuff that could save the whole world?

As if to answer my question, my father broke ranks with the marchers and walked over to Mr. Calvanico, who was holding a small American flag.

"Good to see you, Tony," I heard my father say as he extended his hand.

Mr. Calvanico wouldn't smile at my father or shake his hand. Instead, he held on to his flag and stared at my father with an almost glazed look of hatred.

"Would you stop over later today—three o'clock, say, and take a look at the filter?" asked my father. "I'm having fits with it again."

"Sure thing," said Mr. Calvanico.

Later, after Congressman Lowenstein's speech, my mother, father, and I drove home in an uncomfortable silence. My mother said, "Could you believe the women, with those flabby arms and the cheap pantsuits," but neither my father nor I wanted to talk about fashion. I was thinking that being a liberal was never going to be so fun and easy again, and that I should probably do some learning before my next letter to the editor. □

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on's decision in early 1969 to stay the course, at least until a settlement satisfactory to the United States could be obtained. Johnson's Defense Secretary, Clark Clifford, who had "reached the absolute deep conviction that we weren't going to win the war, and [therefore] the thing for us to do was to get out, and get out as quickly as we could," had three long meetings with Henry Kissinger during the transition between the two administrations in late 1968. "I thought I had persuaded him and Mr. Nixon of the unique, rare opportunity to render a great service by declaring that we were going to get out of Vietnam. I later learned that he did not support it, and neither did Mr. Nixon."

Instead, Nixon decided to transfer gradually the bulk of the fighting to the ARVN, and slowly withdraw as much of the American force as possible, while simultaneously negotiating in Paris with the Hanoi regime. (Ambassador Bui Diem reminds us that the substance of these discussions—indeed, for most of the time even their very existence—was largely unknown by the Saigon government until the United States had completed them, and the peace agreement itself was presented to it as a virtual *fait accompli.*) Kissinger's objective was to forge a strategic equilibrium of the sort that, at least in appearance, would freeze more or less indefinitely the political and military status quo. Vietnam was not, however, a conventional war of defined boundaries like Korea, so that people like Richard Armitage were "appalled by the discussions in Paris." He found "bizarre . . . the setting up of zones where the Communists had control, and the naive acceptance by some people that the Communists would obey the same rules we did. Setting up ICCS commissions to observe the cease-fire violations when you couldn't get the Communist members of ICCS to go out was absurd."

Since conservatives tend to rest so much of their case on these agreements, it is worth recounting just how expensive the package was. It consisted of not merely sustained, indefinite military aid to the South Vietnamese, but the promise that in the event of violation of the accords, the United States would resume bombing of the North, and perhaps even reintroduce American combat troops under certain circumstances. To be effective over the long run, this would conceivably require a succession of American administrations committed to the same solution, and willing to pay the same price—surely a highly problematic prospect even had there been no Watergate. Moreover, as was revealed later, in a secret additional protocol Nixon promised the North Vietnamese nearly *$5 billion* in aid ("reparations," in their view) to observe the agreements, a bribe that, in the event, proved unpersuasive. While these complicated arrangements were being put into place over a six-year period, another 27,000 American soldiers, sailors, and airmen died—the most expensive gamble in our history.

"By God," declares Graham Martin, former Ambassador to Vietnam, in *The Bad War*, "we should have done what we said we would do, and I am convinced that if we had done so, that place today would be viable and operating on its own." If poor Ambassador Martin keeps repeating this, maybe even he will come to believe it. Unfortunately, any truly dispassionate evaluation of the policy suggests that it was too complicated and too risky to succeed. Above all, it was based on assumptions about North Vietnamese motivations that had been proved wrong time and again. The fact that Nixon and Kissinger were (unjustly) vilified by many people whom conservatives and others (rightly) regard as scurrilous does not make the policy more realistic, and to pretend it does is to do a profound disservice to the truth.

Evidently, the South Vietnamese leadership itself never had much faith in this solution, which explains why President Thieu raised so many objections to the Paris accords. Thus, ironically, the entire Nixon policy, which looked so "hawkish" at home, was seen in many quarters in Vietnam as a sign of American weakness. "The single most demoralizing event for us," journalist Mai Pham recalls, "was Kissinger's 'peace is at hand' remark. . . . It meant the Americans were out, [because] as long as you didn't have Americans there, you didn't have anything." She adds, "we were so used to having *somebody* there. The withdrawal was very traumatic for our society. . . . To me, the fall of Saigon was never an if, it was a when."

"You know we would have preferred a military victory," Kissinger told Bui Diem in November 1972, "but we just could not do it. Now is the time to settle before we cannot do any more." By then the U.S. agenda had been reduced to the bare bones: return of prisoners-of-war and a basic recognition by Hanoi of the South Vietnamese government—that, and some promises to respect the integrity and independence of its neighbor, promises that could be regarded as little more than cosmetic. In effect, in exchange for the Paris accords, the government of North Vietnam agreed to exempt the United States from further humiliation while it prepared to take advantage of the most opportune moment to administer the *coup de grâce.*

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The decision of Congress steadily to reduce aid to South Vietnam—"such," according to Schlesinger, "that we were putting in one-third of the resources we had pledged to put in"—was probably less important in the end than the sense it conveyed that we were in the process of divesting ourselves of our erstwhile allies, as indeed we certainly were. But—to put no great gloss on the matter—if the permanent presence of 500,000 Americans in South Vietnam, exposed daily to peril of life and limb, or at least the credible threat of their reintroduction, once withdrawn, was the *sine qua non* of that country's survival as an independent nation, then it is hard to see how it could have avoided the fate that befell it.

## VII

The enduring tragedy of Vietnam—above and beyond the appalling human cost to us and our defeated ally—is that the failure to prevail there has been translated from a practical or strategic question to a moral one. There was, Secretary Schlesinger remarks, an "erroneous belief that getting shut out of Vietnam would be a victory for the United States," a syndrome that later inspired the notion that the United States was on the "wrong side" of history and that the test of authenticity for any leadership in the Third World was its hostility to this country; conversely, that anyone who seeks alignment with us must of necessity be morally flawed. Thus, former Senator Gary Hart declares that in many parts of the world today

> we have a choice—either to side with the indigenous democratic forces, or to sit back and watch a bloody slide into repression. And in some of those [countries], we are making the wrong choice. We are, for example, providing military hardware for the contras, and that I think is going to come back to haunt us.

The war also encouraged too many people to invest heavily in the notion of America's wickedness—so heavily, in fact, that they cannot afford to abandon it now. Thus even the ghoulish conduct of the victors in both Vietnam and Cambodia must somehow be laid at *our* door. While Joan Baez sincerely deplores the post-war events in both countries, she still thinks *everything* is the fault of the United States. "We really fertilized the ground for more violence," she declares in *The Bad War*, as if politics and ideology had nothing whatever to do with the character and conduct of the enemy, even long after the withdrawal of the United States and the collapse of South Vietnam.

Even more pernicious is the notion that international morality is served not by the outcome of any particular conflict, but merely the absence of U.S. participation in it. Baez's former husband, David Harris, takes pride in the fact that the "Vietnam mentality" has placed limitations on U.S. foreign policy—"there are a lot of young Americans and even more young Angolans or you name it, who are alive today because of that." This is California narcissism in its most luxuriant expression: while American intervention in Angola conceivably would have exacted an intolerable price from *us*, its absence has not prevented the thousands of young Angolans, as well as 30,000 young Cubans, from dying there, often under unspeakable circumstances. The same is true of Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Ethiopia, and perhaps before long, it will be as true for Nicaragua. Warmed-over sixties radicals have yet to confront the fact that by withdrawing from the U.S. sphere of influence—or rather, by being deliberately placed outside the U.S. strategic reach—other countries do not necessarily enter the progressive kingdom of heaven, and there are many peoples who can attest from their own experience to precisely the opposite. Vietnam is one of them.

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Paradoxically, the war cry of the left ("No more Vietnams!") has become, willy-nilly, that of the right as well, at least in Defense Secretary Weinberger's recent pronouncements on the requirements that must be satisfied before our military will get into another conflict. Weinberger, says Schlesinger, "seems to want an advance guarantee that it's going to be a popular winnable war, that the consensus is going to remain in support of the forces. That is in practice a formula for saying that we're never going in anyplace. And you can't tell your possible opponents what you're not going to do." Henry Kissinger adds, "If you can avoid force, you should avoid force. But there is no cost-free foreign policy. After Vietnam, answer this question: Is there anything in this world other than an attack on the United States that we will resist by force? If the answer is 'no,' we will gradually be pushed back into fortress America, by definition." Not surprisingly, Eugene McCarthy has the best, final word:

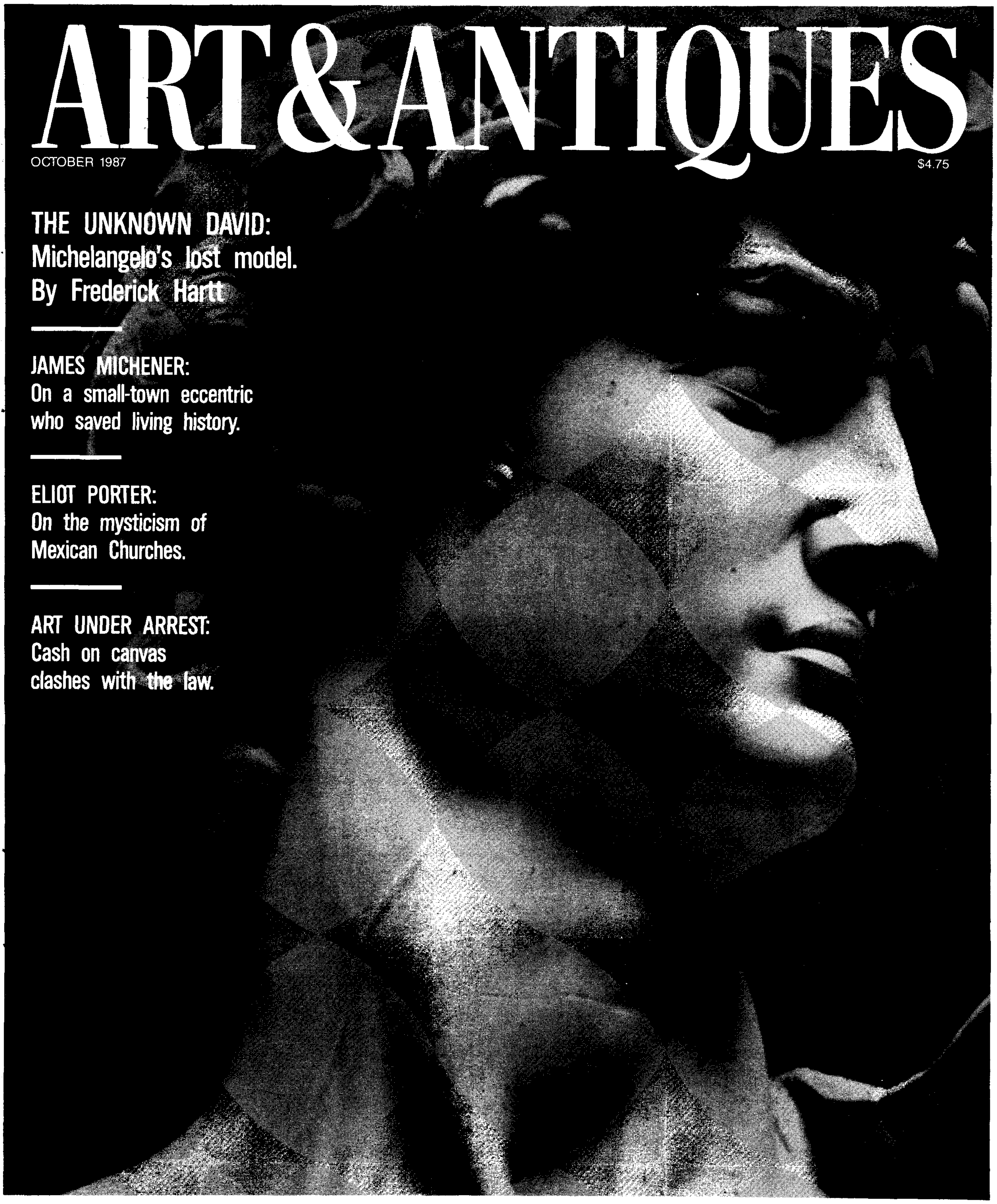
> They say we'll never get in another war like Vietnam, and I guess we never will. But they also say, 'Well, we're never going to get into a limited war.' So you say, 'Well, God, it better be a limited war like Vietnam than to be in an unlimited war.' It's a leap of logic, but that's sort of the implication of it.

Matters have gone even further than that. Not only is a big war unthinkable ("nuclear winter"), and a small one ("another Vietnam") also unthinkable, but even mere strategic military assistance to a beleaguered Third World ally like El Salvador, or naval protection of Gulf oil shipments, are *also* unthinkable. If this is the case, then there is really no reason to have armed forces, and it would be far better to devote the resources currently appropriated to defense to balancing our budget deficits. It is unfortunate that none of the politicians who play upon our fears of another Vietnam—in Central America or elsewhere—are willing to say explicitly what they are implying, namely, that the United States should dismantle a costly military establishment which it is never going to use. If this is not what they mean, it would be nice if they would tell us *which* wars it is acceptable to prepare for.

Perhaps the most unfortunate line, propounded by Willenson and also some people in his book, is that the United States actually came out ahead by losing in Vietnam. He quotes approvingly Ambassador William Sullivan to the effect that "the supreme irony is, aren't we lucky we didn't [win], because now we've got an equilibrium in the Pacific which is probably the best that has prevailed there since the sixteenth century." Is the lesson, then, that the war should have been fought to be lost? Or never fought at all? If the latter, would this have happened if the United States had never been there in the first place? If the former, then—by a perverted twist of logic—the hawks must have been right after all, merely wrong about the proper date of withdrawal! Such arguments amount to pernicious nonsense. As Richard Betts points out in *Vietnam as History*, there are limits to hindsight. Just because the Sino-American rapprochement happened later, he writes, does not mean it could have happened in the mid-1960s, when the international context was entirely different.

> We know more now, but we do not know how a disastrous war could have been avoided except at the possible price that was foreseen at the time—acceptance of a disastrous defeat. Kennedy and Johnson were wrong in stepping irrevocably into the inferno, but they were not necessarily wrong in estimating that failing to do so could produce a bitter reaction.

And he adds, "now, as then, major Communist advances cannot be contained or ignored without running risks, and what we know about the follies of Vietnam cannot tell today's leaders how to make painless choices." Conservatives will have to accept the fact that there is such a thing as "the wrong war in the wrong place," and to persist in such enterprises is dangerously to overdraw the moral resources necessary to meet other, more central strategic challenges. Exactly where these are on the map will always remain a matter of debate, but surely they cannot be everywhere. By insisting upon Vietnam as the test case of our willingness to meet Communist aggression, and then failing to resolve it successfully, the "hawks" of yesterday have made it too easy for "doves" of today to say that no place in the world is worth our time or effort. ☐



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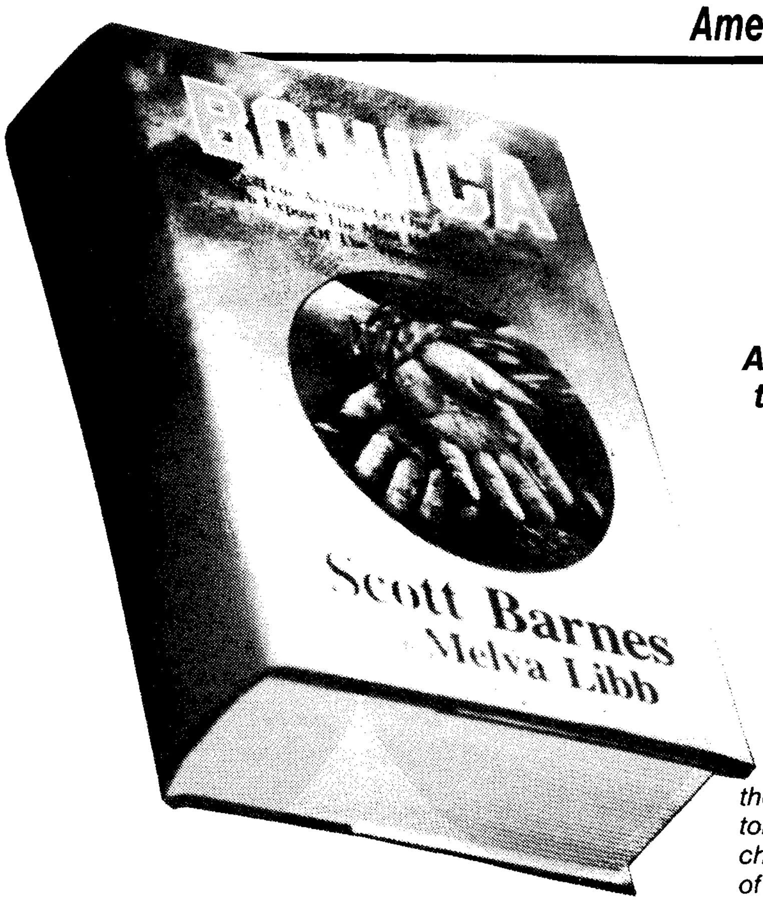

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# BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS

An *American Spectator* tradition continues:
Holiday gift suggestions from eminent readers and writers.

### JOSEPH ALSOP

As I grow older, I find myself reading more and more of the long works I hurried through when I was young—or at any rate, substantially younger. So I recommend, first, any well-printed, complete edition of Churchill's life of his great ancestor, the Duke of Marlborough. It's a historical masterpiece for which there is no exact parallel, and it delights me all the more because it irritates professional historians. The exact title is *Marlborough, His Life and Times*, and it can be obtained in several formats ranging from two to six volumes. But the reader should be sure to reject any format which achieves compression by small print.

The same rules apply to Shelby Foote's massive narrative history of the Civil War. It is the only reliable narrative history I have run across, and it is worth all the time the three huge volumes take to read in order to get an overall picture of what happened. After all, the Civil War gave us Americans our only real saint, Abraham Lincoln, and our only serious national epic in the bargain.

Finally, my only exotic recommendation is *The Tales of the Heike*, in two volumes, translated by Hiroshi Kitagawa and Bruce T. Tsuchida. I started rereading it as soon as I had finished Foote's three volumes, because this is the unique Japanese national epic. But I also find it very beautiful and very instructive.

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*Joseph Alsop, for many years a syndicated columnist, lives in Washington, D.C.*

### JACQUES BARZUN

Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The New History and the Old* (Harvard Press) is a series of trenchant essays that make clear the changes not merely in the writing of history but in the social, moral, and intellectual attitudes of the authors and the public they address—all this in truly elegant prose.

Jonathan Goodman, *The Slaying of Joseph Bowne Elwell* (St. Martin's Press). This adroit reconstruction of an unsolved murder of 1920 evokes at the same time the color and tone of the decade that followed—postwar gaiety and the reckless determination to enjoy and show off the ability to do it. Elwell was a famous and prosperous bridge expert; he was shot at home, not for some misdeed at the bridge table.

Gay Wilson Allen and Roger Asselineau, *St. John de Crevecoeur* (Viking Press). The *Letters of An American Farmer* used to be in the Everyman Library and one could enjoy the travels, observations, and patriotic fervor of this French-American explorer, soldier, and diplomat. Now two scholars have produced a "life" that covers the man's entire perilous odyssey and shows him at work in both America and France. The clear, concise account (250 pp.) is a delight.

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*Jacques Barzun is a historian and critic.*

### GARY L. BAUER

I would start with *The Birth Dearth*, by Ben J. Wattenberg, an analysis of the problems the West will face economically, politically, and socially if free men and women continue to have only 1.8 children per family. This provocative study, written by a man otherwise known for his instinctive optimism, presents a worrisome future in which half a billion people in the free world will face 9.5 billion in the rest of the world.

*The Capitalist Revolution*, by Peter L. Berger, outlines fifty propositions about property, equality, and liberty that ought to be part of any conservative's arsenal. Berger demonstrates the causal connection between capitalism, political democracy, and individual autonomy.

*Against All Hope*, by Armando Valladares, is yet another message from the belly of the beast. It should be must reading for anyone still confused about the nature of totalitarianism. One hopes that someday this study in courage and faith will be required reading in American and Cuban schools.

Finally, for entertaining and provocative fiction, *The Thanatos Syndrome* demonstrates once again Walker Percy's ability to dissect American culture and expose it, warts and all. Percy fans will find this one his best yet.

---

*Gary L. Bauer is Assistant to the President for Policy Development.*

TEA SET
GOODIES

### PETER BAUER

1. Nigel Barley: *The Innocent Anthropologist* (Penguin Books, 1986). A most entertaining and informative account of an anthropologist's experiences in Cameroon. It throws into relief the paradox of the respect or even self-abasement with which the West faces African rulers.

2. Thomas S. Szasz: *The Therapeutic State* (Prometheus Books, 1984). A collection of essays by this acute and relentless thinker on modern psychiatry and the erosion of personal responsibility. The three pieces on the Hinckley case are likely to be of particular interest to readers of *The American Spectator.*

3. R. Gordon Wasson: *The Hall Carbine Affair* (1948). A scholarly and readable monograph dissecting the widely canvassed myth that J. Pierpont Morgan's fortune was founded with the help of a fraudulent transaction in the Civil War. An instructive discussion of the process by which a legend has become widely accepted as fact.

4. Leonard Q. Ross (Leo Rosten): *The Education of Hyman Kaplan* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich). This delightful evergreen gains added interest in the light of bilingual education in American public schools.

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*Lord Bauer is professor emeritus at the London School of Economics and author, most recently, of* Dissent on Development *(Harvard).*

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### PATRICK J. BUCHANAN

For history, *Modern Times* by Paul Johnson; for a view of the McCarthy era, I have read nothing better than *A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy*, by David Oshinsky (crackling good); for an insight into the character of the Soviet Union that cut the deal with Hitler, *Stalin's Secret War* by Nikolai Tolstoy; and for pleasure, a re-reading of *The Temper of Our Time* by Eric Hoffer. Also, keep an eye out for Buchanan's newest book, to be published by Little, Brown.

*Patrick J. Buchanan was director of White House Communications in 1985-1986.*

### RICHARD BURT

*Modern Times: The World from the Twenties to the Eighties*, by Paul Johnson. Published just a few years ago, Paul Johnson's masterful analysis of twentieth-century history has already become a classic. Must reading for anyone remotely interested in politics and foreign affairs.

*The Fringes of Power: Ten Downing Street Diaries*, by John Colville. Colville's work not only sheds new light on the British effort in World War II, but also provides delightful insights into the most democratic politician of modern times—Winston Churchill.

*A Perfect Spy*, John le Carré. Not the "perfect" spy novel, but a brilliantly written novel of postwar British social mores. The character of Magnus Pym, the flamboyant con man, is unforgettable.

*Berlin Game*, *Mexico Set*, and *London Match*, by Len Deighton. These are the "perfect" spy novels; the slightly bedraggled but shrewd agent, the unrelenting KGB, and excellent local color.

*Rock of Ages: The Rolling Stone History of Rock 'n' Roll*, by Ed Ward, Geoffrey Stokes, and Ken Tucker. A surprisingly well-written and intelligent analysis of the social roots of rock 'n' roll. Especially interesting is the authors' discussion of how black rhythm and blues influenced the high point of rock—the British bands in the mid-1960s.

*Richard Burt is the United States Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany.*

### RICHARD W. CARLSON

*Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth*, by Derek Freeman. This woman's balloon should have been pricked long ago. Pity that those cultural anthropologists who knew the extent to which Mead's rep was built on hogwash and self-promotion never had the guts to speak out earlier. Professor Freeman's book is decades late but valuable nonetheless. The effect on society of Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa*, first printed in 1928, is almost incalculable. Freeman demonstrates beyond doubt that many of Mead's observations about Samoan society were wholly wrong, some of them preposterously so, and her conclusions ridiculous. Margaret Mead was the American Lysenko and Freeman proves it.

*Republican Party Reptile*, by P. J. O'Rourke. This fellow O'Rourke is funny. For one thing, he loves Roosevelt. "Not the one in the wheelchair, the good one who killed bears." We could use more Republicans like him. He pulls off what was crassly called in my youth an "RF," in this case a kind of literary mooning that mocks pomposity. This collection of essays ought to be handed out on campuses to recruit more neocon-libertarian-centrist-genuine liberals like O'Rourke to the cause. Also, students would be attracted to his name. It sounds like a bar.

*The Path to Power: The Early Years of Lyndon Johnson*, by Robert Caro. The best political biography in years. This crisply written and scholarly portrayal of one of the darkest and most complex scalawags ever spawned by the New Deal is superb. It concludes in the 1940s. Caro's eagerly awaited sequel will chronicle a period of even thicker intrigue.

*Ten Years of Exile: The Memoirs of Madame de Staël*, translated by Doris Beik. The deep-thinking French exile Germaine de Staël, who got the boot personally from Napoleon after publication of her masterpiece, *On Germany*, was tough and smart. Her perceptive remembrances of illustrious contemporaries—Talleyrand, Czar Alexander, all the Bonapartes—are insightful, stimulating, and fun to read.

*Chronicles of Wasted Time (The Green Stick* and *The Infernal Grove)*, by Malcolm Muggeridge. What a path Muggeridge has traveled for over eighty years. These volumes of scribblings and notes from remarkable conversations and encounters with Baruch, the Webbs, Orwell, Wodehouse, and Nehru are first rate. The trip begins in schizophrenic socialism, continues through lots of turns and detours, and ends with Muggeridge as one of the most convincing Christians of our time. He is always wry and entertaining, and never boring. The Sunday *Times* of London quite rightly called it "one of the greatest autobiographies of our time."

*China: Alive in the Bitter Sea*, by Fox Butterfield. I finished this book on the plane to Peking. It is terrific for people who want a feel for what life is like in a complicated and wildly contradictory society. It was of great use to me in two weeks of meetings with government brass and in conversations with ordinary Chinese.

*The Life and Death of Lenin*, by Robert Payne. Lenin's specter still haunts the world. "He won't be forgotten," said Khrushchev (speaking also of Marx and Engels) "until shrimp learn to sing." Khrushchev clearly missed the mark on Engels but he was right otherwise. Payne's biography of Lenin holds the man out to clear view, separates him from legend, and brings him almost alive on paper.

*Political Pilgrims*, by Paul Hollander. This book is an important tool for the armchair shrink who wants to poke around in the tangled psyches of those Western intellectuals who fuss and drool over left-wing dictatorships. Ernesto Betancourt, who runs the highly effective Radio Marti, touted this book to me in a conversation about Alexander Cockburn and the crowd at the *Nation*.

*Maine Lingo*, by John Gould (and the editors of *Down East* magazine). When we lived in California, one of my sons asked me what a cod was. A kind of fish, I said. He looked confused. No wonder. We had just returned from vacation in Maine and he had heard the caretaker order a "cod" of wood for winter (known as "wintah"). I like Maine a lot and I like the way Mainers talk. This book won't teach you any weird pronunciations. You ought to be *born* to that. But it is filled with oddball words and phrases peculiar to that distinct and isolated corner of the U.S. A fellow who's growing old is "getting over in your book." A person who can't keep a secret "leaks like a basket." Buy this, store it in your cuddy, and pull it out for a read of a snowy evening. This is good and genuine material.

*Richard W. Carlson, a journalist and former mortgage banker, is director of the Voice of America.*

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**ROBERT CONQUEST**

The books I shall be reading are a bit unChristmassy in one way or another. I will have another go at Vasily Grossman's *Life and Fate*: it is one of those enormous Tolstoyan novels which some like better than I do, but in this case it really is "social realism" about the USSR. The author, the leading Soviet writer on Hitler's death camps, here devastatingly makes the parallel with Stalinism. Gripping, horrible, necessary. Otherwise, Gibbon's *Vindication* again: wonderfully catty controversy. Similarly, A. E. Houseman's *Selected Prose*: who can resist "Having small literary culture they are not revolted by illiteracy, having slight knowledge of grammar they are not revolted by solecism, having no sequence of ideas they are not revolted by incoherency, having nebulous thoughts they are not revolted by nonsense." And the *Works of George Savile, First Marquess of Halifax*, by far Britain's most interesting politician, but also up to "The struggling for Knowledge hath a Pleasure in it like that of Wrestling with a fine Woman."

*Robert Conquest's most recent book is* The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror Famine *(Oxford University Press).*

**EDWARD H. CRANE**

I'm pleased to recommend five books guaranteed to enlighten your readership. Drano for clogged minds, as someone once said. Here they are:

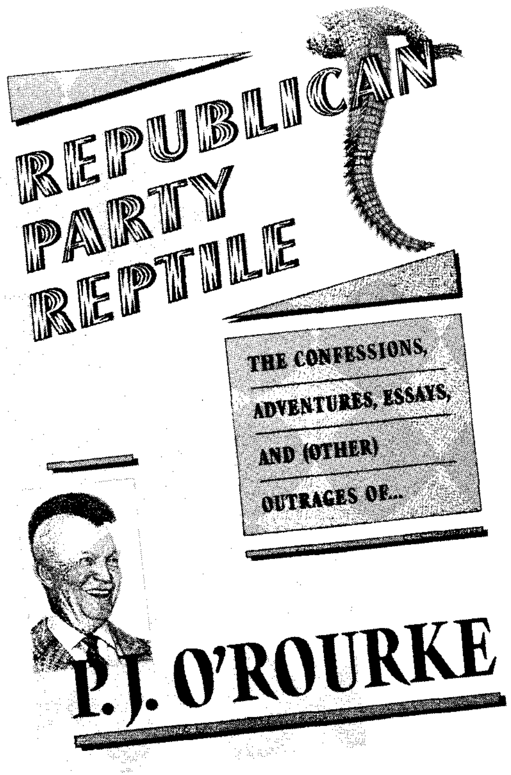
*The New Right v. The Constitution* by Stephen Macedo (Cato Institute, 1987, revised). A devastating indictment of the ominous current in conservative judicial thought known as "judicial restraint." Macedo takes Bork, Rehnquist, Meese, and the rest to task for their unprincipled majoritarianism, moral skepticism, and lack of appreciation for the Supreme Court's role in protecting economic liberties. Must reading for conservatives who haven't yet turned their brains over to the neocons.

*Republican Party Reptile* by P. J. O'Rourke (Atlantic Monthly Books, 1987). Contrary to some published reports, there's no need to revise your list of oxymorons by deleting "conservative humorist." O'Rourke is a closet libertarian who shares not only Mencken's wit, but his hatred of the state as well. O'Rourke is not just hilarious, his political satire is perceptive and devastatingly on target.

*The Suicidal Corporation* by Paul Weaver (Simon and Schuster, 1988). This soon to be published book is a brilliant critique of the bureaucratic corporation and how its senior executives are more adept at politics than entrepreneurship. Weaver, a neocon-turned-libertarian, draws on his days as a PR flack at Ford to paint a bleak picture of corporate America's ability (and desire) to defend itself. He convincingly makes a case for the demise of the corporate state.

*Crisis and Leviathan* by Robert Higgs (Oxford University Press, 1987). This book deserves to be read by anyone concerned over the seemingly inexorable growth of government in the twentieth century. Higgs provides a compelling case that government takes advantage of crises such as depressions and war to greatly expand its power and scope of activities, using the current "emergency" to justify its actions. Ignore the clueless negative review in *TAS* and buy this book.

*In Pursuit* by Charles Murray (Simon and Schuster, 1988). Murray's long-awaited follow-up to *Losing Ground* turns out to be well worth the wait. *In Pursuit* (as in "of happiness") is sort of a humanist approach to the social sciences. In calling for methodological individualism rather than quantitative analysis, Murray challenges the architects of the welfare state to recognize that the terms and condi-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tions of their "solutions" to poverty often preempt the conditions necessary for human happiness. Murray is at once brilliant, passionate, and persuasive—perhaps the most important social scientist in the latter half of the twentieth century.

*Edward H. Crane is president of the Cato Institute.*

### FRANK DEFORD

I'm delighted to respond to your interesting query, although I must confess I feel like this is one of those tests where they tell you just answer honestly, there are no right-and-wrong answers, but you *know* your answers are going to be considered wrong anyway. In any event, in no particular order:

*Alive* by Piers Paul Read. As compelling a book as I ever read, plus it also reveals so much about the human condition. I love to wonder about how I would have done if I had been in such-and-such a situation.

*Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger. I don't care if everybody assumes (probably correctly) that I'm a perpetual teenager. When I was growing up, everybody was either influenced by the *Catcher in the Rye* or *The Fountainhead* and luckily for me I couldn't get through the first chapter of the latter.

*Time and Again* by Jack Finney. Most beguiling book I ever read.

*Babbitt* by Sinclair Lewis. Or *Main Street* if you prefer, or *Dodsworth* or *Elmer Gantry*. Lewis simply had America right better than anyone else; still, for that matter.

I also adored *Lorna Doone* better than any book I read when I was a kid, but I don't even know who wrote it, and, as far as I know, nobody reads *Lorna Doone* anymore. I wonder if it's still around. It was a neat story.

*Frank Deford is a senior writer for* Sports Illustrated.

### NANCY DICKERSON

For over fifteen years, long before the movie was made, my favorite book was *Out of Africa* by Isak Dinesen. In the last year another book comes close to that distinction in my opinion, and that is Beryl Markham's *West with the Night*. Both re-create going to East Africa, which was a peak life experience for me.

In addition, favorite books are *A Confederacy of Dunces* by John Kennedy Toole, because it makes you laugh out loud; *The Wise Men* by Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, because it is the best way to learn how Washington works; and a newly published book, *Wilderness Sojourn* by David Douglas, because if you can't get away from it all, just go sit in a corner and read part of this small volume and it's almost the same thing.

While I wouldn't recommend it for general public reading, I personally love to re-read a page or two of *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk and E. B. White; it's a very satisfying experience.

*Nancy Dickerson is a reporter and commentator for Fox Television News.*

### DIANNE FEINSTEIN

My recommendations are:

1. *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy—a brilliant exposition of life in nineteenth-century Russia and European geo-political changes.
2. *Middlemarch* by George Eliot (pen-name of Mary Ann Evans)—one of the great nineteenth-century English-language classics.
3. *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck—a riveting, heart-breaking story of farmworkers' lives in California.
4. *Keeping Faith* by Jimmy Carter—the first volume of President Carter's memoirs and an excellent account of the Camp David Accords.
5. All the Sherlock Holmes mysteries by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

*Dianne Feinstein is mayor of San Francisco.*

### LEONARD GARMENT

Bed-ridden with the flu when I read William Safire's stupendous *Freedom*, I finished with bruised ribs. The book is truly weighty. So get sick and read Safire. All of Philip Larkin's poetry—*High Windows* and three or four other slender volumes—spare, evocative, modern, pellucidly clear, and immensely moving. Fill your pockets with his poems, and you'll never be alone. The same goes for Wallace Grey's Columbia lectures—*Homer to Joyce*—another portable pleasure, a full course Humanities dinner. Eaten in small bites, you'll put on weight without getting fat.

*Leonard Garment is a Washington attorney.*

### ROBERT M. GATES

*Utopia in Power: The History of the Soviet Union from 1917 to the Present*, by Mikhail Heller and Aleksandr M. Nekrich (Summit Books, 1986). A compelling study of the Soviet Union by two émigré historians who, with unique sources and insight, freshly examine the nature of the Soviet state and the role of the West in helping to sustain it. It provides critical perspective on the perennially topical question: can the Soviet Union overcome its internal crisis? This is the best history of the Soviet Union I have read.

*The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*, by Robert Conquest (Oxford University Press, 1986). A history of the world's most staggering genocidal campaign, in which at least 14 million peasants perished. A new look at how a central element of the present Soviet system was established, and the legacy.

*Commander in Chief: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, His Lieutenants and Their War*, by Eric Larrabee (Harper & Row, 1987). How Roosevelt selected his senior commanders and, together, they brought the nation to victory. A reminder of the importance of senior military officers willing "to speak truth to power" and rich in imagination, boldness, and savvy on battlefields at home and abroad.

For sheer pleasure, a rereading of Catherine Drinker Bowen's *Miracle at Philadelphia*, a leap back to college days with a new version of Sir Thomas

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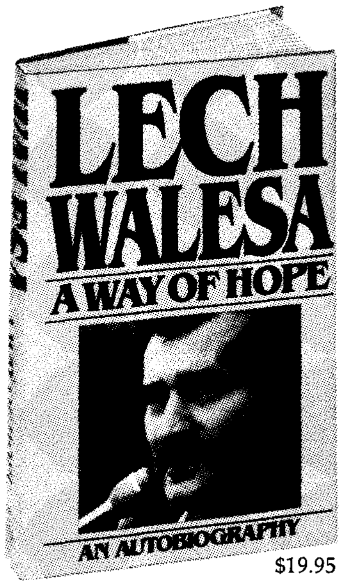

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*Robert M. Gates is the deputy director of Central Intelligence.*

### JEFFREY HART

When the *H.M.S Titanic* sank on that freezing night in April 1912, it became an instant metaphor, or rather multiple and proliferating metaphors. It was the smash-up of the Belle Epoque, the glory of Europe vanished forever, soon to be confirmed by the greater smash-up on the battlefields. It was technological hubris and human stubbornness, Captain Smith sailing into ice-fields he knew were there at more than 22 knots. The *Titanic* was the British Empire, Vietnam, even socialism, rich in endless meanings. The pioneering modern narrative of the disaster remains Walter Lord's *A Night to Remember* (1955), written when many of the survivors could still be interviewed. Last year he brought the discussion up to date with the sophisticated *The Night Lives On* (Morrow). Discussion? Yes Virginia, endless controversies. What *was* the final tune played by the band? Answer: *not* "Nearer My God to Thee," but a dance hall tune known as "Autumn." Was Captain Lord (no relation) of the nearby *Californian*, who could have rescued everybody but chose to wait until morning, a villain? Yes, a Lord Jim, but there is a "Lordite" faction. And just what *were* John Jacob Astor's intentions in the turmoil around the lifeboats? He had decided to die, and was crushed by a collapsing funnel. If, after Walter Lord's searching discussions, you need more, well, there are two fine new books: Michael Davie's *Titanic: The Death and Life of a Legend* (Knopf), and *Titanic: Destination Disaster: The Legend and Reality* by John P. Eaton and Charles A. Haas (Norton), both of which add fascinating new stuff, the latter also a wealth of new photographs. The night lives on indeed, and we have yet to have a full report from the gentlemen who have been on the ocean bottom, exploring the wreck itself with high-tech equipment.

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*Jeffrey Hart is a nationally syndicated columnist and author, most recently, of* From This Moment On *(Crown).*

### DAVID HOROWITZ

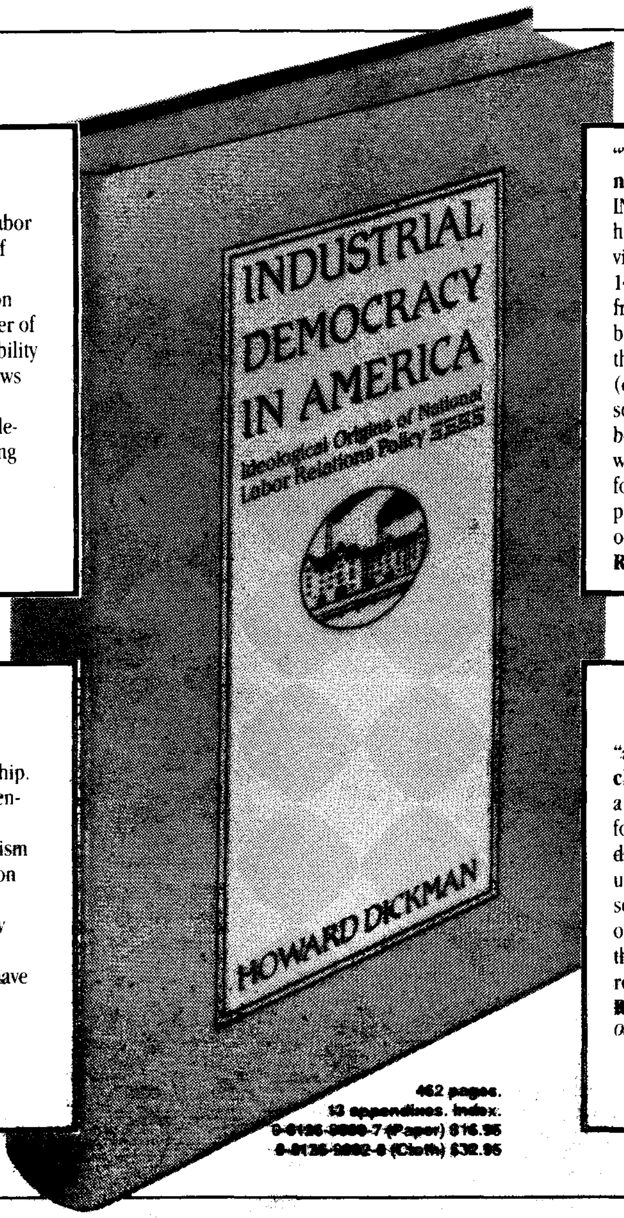
My recommendations: *Utopia in Power* by Mikhail Heller and Aleksandr Nekrich, a masterful account of what happens when the missionary left is allowed the opportunity to put its compassionate ideas into practice; *Out of Step* by Sidney Hook, a merciless chronicle of the intellectual frontier guards of the same social experiment; Michael Kinsley's *Curse of the Giant Muffins*, an incisive, often risible collection by my favorite tough-minded liberal; P. J. O'Rourke's *Republican Party Reptile*, an equally rewarding collection by my favorite loose-minded conservative; Peter Collier's *Downriver*, a brilliant novel of radical deficiencies and radical excess by my favorite like-minded co-author.

---

*David Horowitz is the former editor of* Ramparts *magazine and currently co-director of the Second Thoughts Project. He is also co-author of* The Kennedys: An American Drama *and* The Fords: An American Epic.

### HENRY J. HYDE

*The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill; Visions of Glory, 1874-1932*, by William Manchester (Little, Brown). I found this first volume of Manchester's biography a fascinating and intimate insight into the early years of perhaps the West's greatest statesman of this century. Now available in soft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cover, this is a bargain in both history and literature.

*Tranquillitas Ordinis: The Present Failure and Future Promise of American Catholic Thought on War and Peace*, by George Weigel (Oxford, 1987). This seminal book lives up to its subtitle. Brilliantly written, it is not an easy read, but a rewarding one. Mr. Weigel, president of the James Madison Foundation in Washington, D.C., is a bright young scholar attempting to revive interest and understanding in the late John Courtney Murray's thoughts on "The American Proposition." Anyone interested in the present turmoil in the Catholic Church should read this book.

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*A Little Revenge: Benjamin Franklin and His Son*, by Willard Randall (Little, Brown, 1984) is about the tortured relationship between Franklin and his illegitimate son William. This little known story provides a somewhat different view of one of America's most extraordinary citizens, whose son rose to become Royal Governor of New Jersey, and as a loyalist earned the lasting enmity of his famous father. It is a dramatic and sad story about two very human Revolutionary figures.

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*Henry J. Hyde, a Republican congressman from Illinois, serves on the House Judiciary and Foreign Affairs Committees, and is Ranking Republican on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.*

### WILLIAM G. HYLAND

My first recommendation would be Robert Rhodes James's biography of Anthony Eden. This is a fine analysis of a tragic figure, a man who started as a hero in his early career and ended as an abject failure. How this could come about is the subject of this sympathetic biography. Those who are interested in the course of foreign affairs would do well to read it and ponder.

My second recommendation is Edward Luttwak's book, *Strategy*. This is one of the best books to appear in this country in a very long time. The reason is that it deals with a subject which most Americans find difficult and therefore tend to ignore. The whole question of strategy, military strategy in particular, has to be considered by those who are involved in the conduct of high policy, yet inevitably we become mired down in tactics and gamesmanship. A reading of this volume ought to be a required course for budding statesmen.

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*William G. Hyland is editor of* Foreign Affairs.

### FORREST McDONALD

For openers, let me put in a plug for the old-fashioned practice of having the father or mother of the household read aloud to the family, which in my household we do every night. In addition to its other virtues, reading aloud provides a pretty exacting test of the quality of literary craftsmanship. Fielding's *Tom Jones* reads wonderfully and so does most of Dickens. My favorite Dickens is *Bleak House*, but I would also recommend one of his lesser known novels, *Barnaby Rudge*. Almost anything by Wodehouse written after 1918 will please, and though it is charming fluff it is also as skillfully written as anything one is likely to find in the English language. Among his earlier tales, I would especially push *The Swoop! or How Clarence Saved England (A Tale of the Great Invasion)*, and if Ferrol Sam's two autobiographical novels of his boyhood in Georgia, *Run with the Horseman* and *The Whisper of the River*, don't grab you by the heart, you don't have a heart to grab. Everyone who has read those two, which carry the story up to Pearl Harbor, eagerly awaits the next in the series. Finally, I would suggest Lincoln Steffens's *Autobiography*, which in my view is the classic in that genre.

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*Forrest McDonald is professor of history at the University of Alabama and author of* Novus Ordo Seclorum *(University Press of Kansas).*

### GEORGE J. MITCHELL

1. *The Fatal Shore*, by Robert Hughes. A fascinating history of the settlement of Australia by English convicts.

2. *America Enters the World*, by Page Smith. This is the seventh volume of a "people's history" of the United States. Drawing heavily on diaries and other contemporary documents, it is a lively account of how Americans have lived over the centuries of nationhood.

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*George J. Mitchell is a United States senator from Maine.*

### JEFFERSON MORLEY

True conservatives, appalled by the way Ronald Reagan and Oliver North traduced the Constitution, ought to read two books about the covert action community. The first is *Manhunt* (Jove/Random House), Peter Maas's gripping account of how CIA agent Edwin Wilson sold explosives to Qaddafi. Among Wilson's close pals were Richard V. Secord and former high-ranking CIA officials Thomas Clines and Theodore Shackley. (Not coincidentally, all three are associates of Oliver North.) The depredations of this odious crew are further chronicled in *The Crimes of Patriots* (Norton) by the *Wall Street Journal*'s brilliant investigative reporter, Jonathan Kwitny.

Lionel Trilling is too often taken, by detractors and admirers alike, as being merely a founding father of neoconservativism. But given Trilling's temperament, it is safe to say an Oliver North would have caused him to puke. As Mark Krupnik's fine study, *Lionel Trilling* (Northwestern University), demonstrates, Trilling is far more interesting than some of his putative neoconservative admirers know.

As yet, there is no definitive statement of the independent European peace movement, so *Antipolitics* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) by Hungarian writer George Konrád, will have to suffice. Konrád is anti-Communist, pro-human rights, and anti-Cold War, a combination of ideas desperately needed in U.S. foreign policy.

Always worth reading is Robert Musil, the great and neglected Austrian novelist of the early twentieth century. A new edition of his shorter essays and novellas is now available from the German Library. Musil's sublime masterpiece, "The Perfecting of a Love," is included.

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*Jefferson Morley is the Washington editor of the* Nation *magazine.*

### GEORGE H. NASH

*Fire in the Minds of Men*, by James H. Billington (1980). This magisterial volume traces the rise of the secular religion of revolution—"the amphetamine of the intellectuals"—from the era of Robespierre to the era of Lenin. A work of profound (and profoundly pertinent) learning by the new Librarian of Congress.

*Cold Friday*, by Whittaker Chambers (1964). Long overshadowed by *Witness*, this book of letters and reflections deserves to be rediscovered. If you have time for only part of it, read the chapter entitled "Morningside": the autobiographical account of a conservative young man who entered college in 1920, found his spiritual and intellectual worldview corroded by relativistic secular liberalism, and ended up a committed Communist. It is an essay that remains eerily relevant today.

*Evangelicals in America: Who They Are, What They Believe*, by Ronald H. Nash (1987). If America is to overcome the deepening moral and spiritual disorder whose ravages we experience daily, the exertions of evangelical Christians will be crucial. This little book is a lucid survey of a religious-cultural phenomenon whose ultimate impact will affect us all.

*Hermit of Peking: The Hidden Life of Sir Edmund Backhouse*, by Hugh Trevor-Roper (1977). The astonishing story of an eccentric English scholar (1873-1944) who lived in China for decades and gained a reputation as a distinguished Sinologist—only to be revealed long after his death to have been a brilliant forger and mountebank. If you doubt that "truth is stranger than fiction," read this riveting volume. It is a masterpiece of historical detective work.

*Welcome, Silence*, by Carol North, M.D. (1987). The autobiography of a remarkable young schizophrenic who managed, through sheer force of will and intellect, to drive herself halfway through an outstanding medical school despite the suicidal siren calls of "the voices." Overwhelmed for a time by inner chaos, she was eventually cured almost overnight following experimental treatment and has now completed her medical education. Better still, she has written a unique and moving "inside account" of a nearly twenty-year-long illness and of her triumph over it against all odds.

*George H. Nash, a historian, is the author of* The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945 *and* The Life of Herbert Hoover, *a multivolume biography-in-progress.*

### RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

The formidable title aside, it is an eminently readable book: *Tranquillitas Ordinis: The Present Failure and Future Promise of American Catholic Thought on War and Peace* by George Weigel (Oxford). As though war and peace were not subject enough, Weigel is really proposing an imaginative reappropriation of Roman Catholic social thought across the board. The book has stirred, deservedly, a lively debate, much to the discomfiture of prelates and academics who are embarrassed by the tradition to which they are pledged.

Peter Berger's *The Capitalist Revolution: Fifty Propositions about Prosperity, Equality and Liberty* (Basic) has also received wide attention, but has not provoked the debate that is needed. So closely argued and assiduously documented is his case that it seems few people are willing to take him on. Critics typically say that of course we are all capitalists now, and then return to spinning their socialist dreams. But even if Berger's opponents are not up to debating him, *The Capitalist Revolution* will long serve as an authoritative reference.

Finally, Rowan Greer's *Broken Lights, Mended Lives* (University of Pennsylvania) is a luminous study of how Christians in the first three centuries tried to work out the imperative of being "in but not of" the world. They did not always work it out very well, which of course supports Greer's point about the pertinence of patristic studies to our little moment in time.

*Richard John Neuhaus is director of the Rockford Institute Center on Religion and Society and author, most recently, of* The Catholic Moment.

### EDWARD L. ROWNY

*Journey for Our Time*, by the Marquis de Custine. This nineteenth-century French nobleman's travels in Russia paralleled Alexis de Tocqueville's journeys in America, and like *Democracy in America*, Custine's memoir presents remarkably acute and enduring insights. His concluding thought is even more applicable today than when written in the 1830s: "I don't blame the Russians for being what they are, I blame them for pretending to be what we in the West are."

*The Russian Tradition*, by Tibor Szamuely. This is the best book I know on the subject of why the Soviets behave as they do. Szamuely, better than anyone else, develops the historical roots and cultural traditions which go to make up the character of today's Soviets.

*Modern Times*, by Paul Johnson. Thoughtful and vivid, Johnson's book is invaluable for understanding the complex and perilous age that began with World War I. There is in my opinion no better history of our recent past.

*The Closing of the American Mind*, by Allan Bloom. Here are needed lessons on how Americans' tendencies to be anti-philosophic can leave them prey to ideologues. The New Left assault against academic freedom and intellectual integrity during the 1960s, recalled here by Bloom, parallels today's ideological campaign to pressure scientists to boycott our Strategic Defense Initiative research programs.

*Edward L. Rowny is Special Advisor to the President and Secretary of State for Arms Control Matters.*

### HUGH SIDEY

*Where the Sky Began: Land of the Tallgrass*, by John Madson, Houghton Mifflin: The story of the real reason we have a farm problem; a land so rich that it grew greed along with abundance. And the writing is beautiful.

*The Discoverers*, by Daniel Boorstin, Vintage: One of the most remarkable books of this age. Story after story of men and women who found new places, concepts, ideas, things. There's more excitement in these pages than in the chronicles of James Bond.

*Eisenhower at War*, by David Eisenhower, Random House: The incredible story of how one man's generous and enduring character held the alliance together for victory in World War II. The best account yet of leadership at the top in that war.

*Hugh Sidey is* Time *magazine's Washington contributing editor.*

### ALAN K. SIMPSON

I flog myself because I don't feel I have time to burrow into some good books. Yet, I have no one to blame but myself—and yet they send me home at night with a "full bale of stuff." It goes with the territory, but now that I have slipped into minority status I should have a little more time to dabble in the pleasure of recreational reading.

I am enjoying a book called *Lonesome Dove* by Larry McMurtry. The lilt and the language of it is just my style. Earthy, robust, tender, and real. It's a dandy. And then I never really settled on any particular books, it's just essays and short stories and plays and doggerel of Robert Service and H. L. Mencken and James Thurber. Powerful, pithy, poignant, puckish, highly enjoyable stuff for me. Then I also love Rudyard Kipling. He fits the same bill in many ways.

Another of my great loves in reading and literature are any and all books about art and artists from the "West" of Frederic Remington to the "East" of Jackson Pollock. That's the fun material for me and it contributes fully to my great relaxation and enjoyment. I then blend those readings to complement my love of seeing and enjoying various galleries and museums wherever I may be. That's a real pleasure and one of the greatest of treats for me.

*Alan K. Simpson is a United States senator from Wyoming.*

### JAMES R. THOMPSON

Christmas is a special and traditional time for myself and my family and we certainly enjoy reading some of the classic tales of the season. Among our favorites are:

*A Christmas Carol*: One of the truly classic tales of Christmas, this has been one of my personal favorites since I was a small boy. It is a story that most people are familiar with through television and movie depictions; however, to truly appreciate its special quality I would suggest reading the original Dickens text.

*'Twas the Night Before Christmas*: I don't think any Christmas would be complete without at least one reading of this wonderful poem. I think it embodies the true excitement of the Holiday season for young boys and girls and I always enjoy telling it to my nine-year old daughter, Samantha.

*The Homecoming*: This original Christmas story later inspired the Waltons series. It is a touching, historic portrayal of a pre-commercial Christmas as it existed during the years of the Great Depression. It certainly typifies the love and caring which has so long been associated with this time of year.

The Bible: An obvious choice for obvious reasons. Often times we forget why we celebrate the holiday of Christmas.

*James R. Thompson is governor of Illinois.*

### MORTIMER ZUCKERMAN

*Freedom* by William Safire—a brilliant perspective on the first two years of the Civil War from the point of view of the politics of the North.

*The Great Depression of 1990* by Ravi Batra—a little fanciful but something to focus people's attention on a brewing problem.

*The Power of Politics* by William H. McNeal—a forceful perspective on history seen through the changes in military technology.

*A History of the Jews* by Paul Johnson—anything of Mr. Johnson's is compelling and informative.

*Mortimer Zuckerman is editor-in-chief of* U.S. News & World Report.

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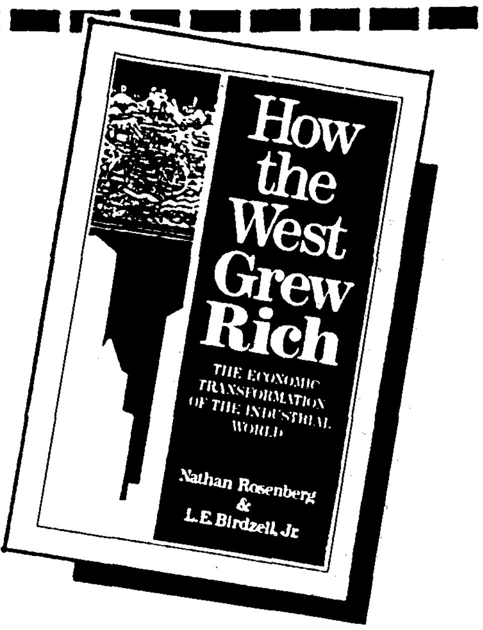

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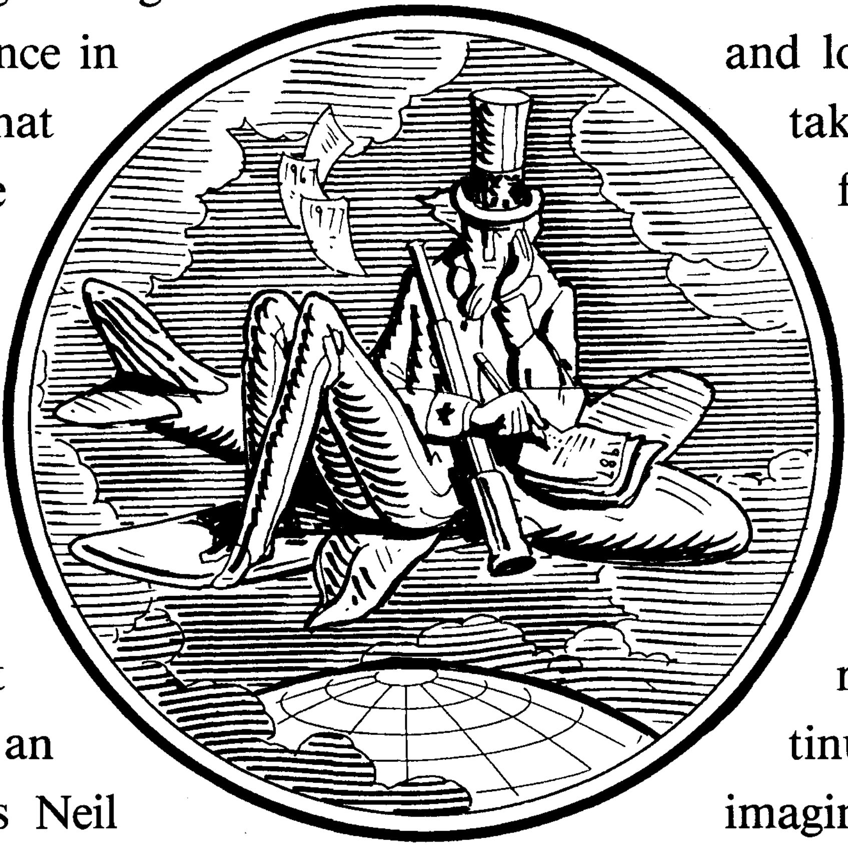
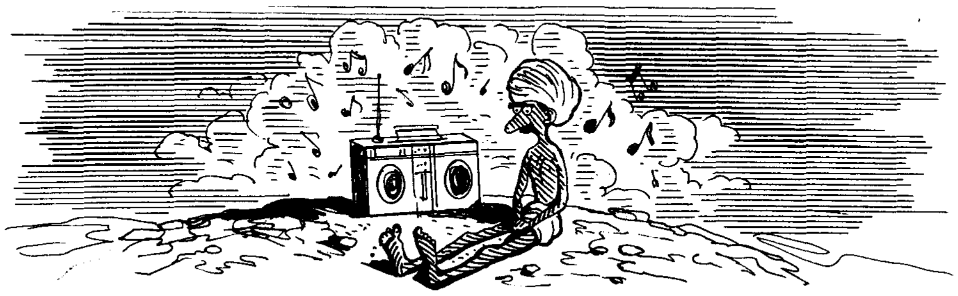
# A DIRTY DOZEN 1987-2007

"Democratic nations care little for what has been," wrote Tocqueville in *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, "but they are haunted by visions of what will be." The wise Frenchman, of course, was writing a long time ago. It has been our experience in the past twenty years that when Americans are haunted it has less to do with the future than it does with that last slice of cold pizza they shouldn't have eaten before bedtime. This earthbound attachment to the present is both an American asset and, as Neil Howe suggested earlier, a deficiency with effects we are only now beginning to anticipate.

So with the public-spiritedness that marks *The American Spectator*'s every enterprise, we have sought in our anniversary issue to correct this partial defect and fashion ourselves according to Tocqueville's portrait of earlier democrats—to care less for what has been than for what will be. In the pages that follow, we have asked a number of friends and longtime contributors to take hold of a subject they find of special interest and give us a sense of how things will shape up come the year 2007, when we will celebrate our fortieth anniversary. "In this direction," Tocqueville continued, "their unbounded imagination grows and dilates beyond all measure." Our writers are too jolly (too American?) to peel away the future's veil and be haunted by what they see; but as Tom Wolfe, George Gilder, and Neil Howe have already shown, and as the ensuing essays confirm, we are in for a curious ride.



*P. J. O'Rourke*/The Third World



# DOOMED

Lately I've been spending some time in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, absorbing the exotic sights, loud sounds, and great big smells of the developing world and getting to know the special warmth and humor of its citizens. (“Have a *Goodyear,* ” as the pro-ANC teenagers said to the necklaced police informer on New Year's Eve in Soweto.) A brilliant future awaits the Third World, a future filled with peace, prosperity, health, and happiness, a future which the people of the Third World will reach, um . . . the moment they die and go to heaven. And, for a very large number of them, that will be soon indeed because they're dying like flies out there in Upper Revolta and Absurdistan.

This is the main thing the next two decades will bring to the Third World—the same thing the last two decades brought—lots and lots of colorful death. What with famine, war, genocide, sexually transmitted diseases, and generally dirty habits, we can expect the next twenty years to be a veritable festival of Malthusianism. Or semi-Malthusianism. Because the only thing that's going to exceed the astonishing, incredible Third World death rate will be its amazing, unbelievable, buglike rate of reproduction. By the year 2007 something like 3 billion people will be added to the Earth's population, none of them in a place you'd care to have a second home.

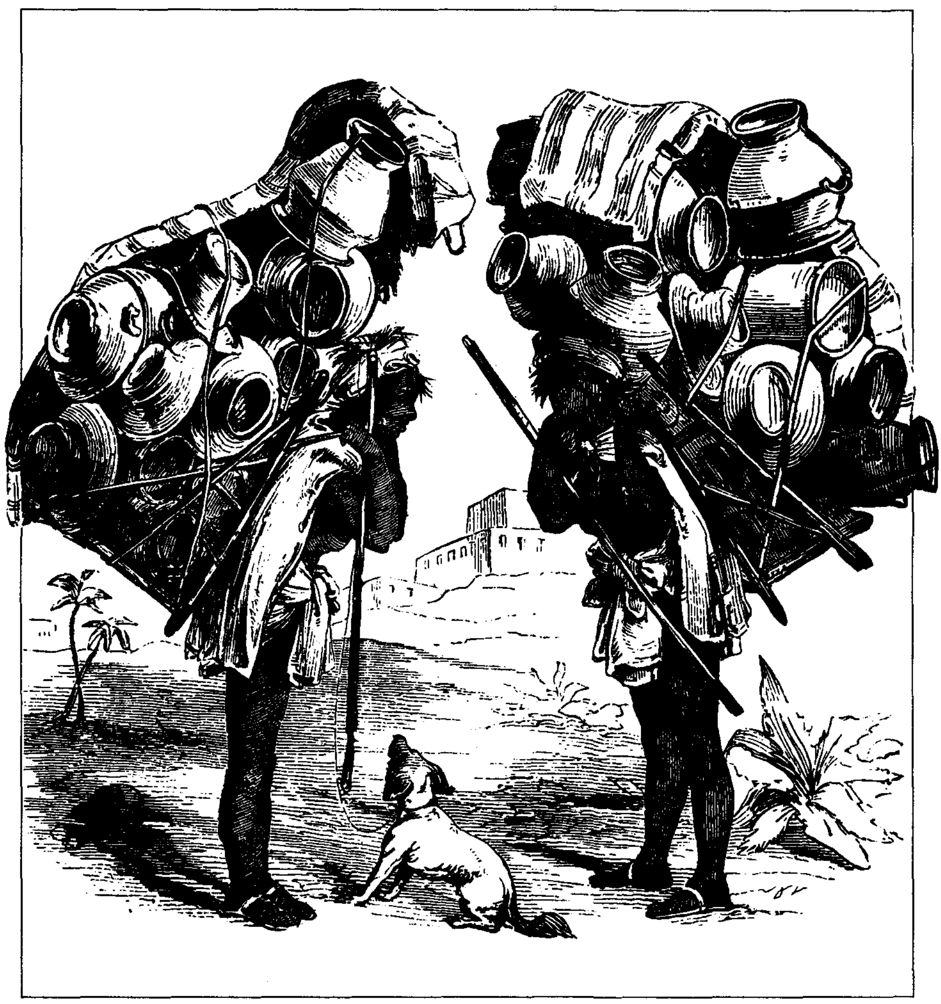
Due to this actuarial pro wrestling match between mortality and screwing like bunnies, average age in the Third World will drop precipitously. By 2007 many Third World business and political leaders will be under the age of five. Thus government and economic matters will be conducted at approximately the same level of maturity and sophistication they are now.

Of course, all under-developed countries will be military dictatorships. The military seems to be the only institution capable of keeping order in these lands. It does this by shooting all corrupt and incompetent people, which in Uganda, for instance, turned out to be everybody. Usually, however, the corrupt and incompetent people the military shoots are military officers. This is why Third World military dictatorships tend to move, coup by coup, down through the ranks. Colonels overthrow generals, majors overthrow colonels, and so forth until we get to Ghana's Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings or Liberia's Sgt. Samuel K. Doe. The trend will continue. In twenty years Third World military dictatorships will be headed by Webelo Scouts and the people who empty latrines on army bases.

Nonetheless, a rough political stability will have been achieved in some places such as Lebanon, Afghanistan, Angola, Peru, and Sri Lanka where insurgent, guerrilla, and terrorist groups will have multiplied until there is one for each living person.

The Indian subcontinent, much of Africa, and parts of the Mideast will give up on the whole idea of independence and plead for re-establishment of the British Empire. “Please to come back Sahib English and snob us and get the Coca-Cola machine to work again,” they will beg. But to no avail. Margaret Thatcher will be long out of office; the Labour party will be back in power, and Britain will be a colony of Jamaica.

Ideologically, Marxism will continue to make enormous inroads in underdeveloped countries. After all, when you're living in hopeless poverty and filth and there's a political philosophy that offers you hopeless poverty and filth, it only makes sense to go with the flow. In 2007 *every* Third World country will be a member of the Communist Bloc. This should go a long way to destroying the new, hip, *glasnost* Soviet Union. The Soviet Communist Party chief (probably Olga Korbut) will find herself broke, confused, embroiled in a thousand local tribal wars, and reduced to the same influence over international Marxism that Mayor Koch now has over New York.



Koch will be, thank God, dead by then. But not before having been elected Secretary General of the U.N. The Ayatollah Khomeini, however, will still be alive and serving as President of the World Council of Churches.

Twenty years from now all religion will be fundamentalist religion, even the Church of England. Wild-eyed “Tutuist” Anglicans will riot in Anzania (formerly the Union of South Africa). They'll force people to play contract bridge at gunpoint and make unbelievers eat little sandwiches with the crusts cut off. No woman will dare appear in the street without a small, stupid hat like Queen Di's.

Zionism will still raise unaccountably powerful emotions in the Third World. And there will be continuing terrorist attacks and protest incidents in the Israeli capital of Riyadh.

Over the next two decades the military balance will shift dramatically in favor of the Third World. We in the United States, the Soviet Union, and China will have given up our nuclear arms because they didn't go with our shoes and took up valuable space that could be used to build vacation condos. In the meantime, every Third World country including Fernando Po will have acquired the bomb. Unfortunately they won't use their bombs on each other no matter how hard sensible people like ourselves argue for them to do so. They *will* use the bombs on us, or, at least, they'll try to. But every time they do they'll find 80 or 100 refugee families living in the missile silos and all the weapons grade

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*P. J. O'Rourke is a frequent contributor to* The American Spectator *as well as to* Rolling Stone, Vanity Fair, *and other publications.*

plutonium stolen to make glow-in-the-dark tourist knick-knacks.

On the financial front, most underdeveloped countries will have economies based on breaking things, losing things, and stealing. The resulting negative GNPs will be made up by World Bank loans—necessary in order to maintain low unemployment and inflation in the last of the remaining Western democracies (South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan). International currency will be the cow chip.

The Third World debt problem, however, will be solved at last as developing nations offer to "work off" their various loan defaults. The entire country of Bolivia will come over to your house and do the lawn.

This and other factors will make illegal immigration a continuing problem. But liberals will still resist passing laws giving the United States an official language. Many Americans, they'll point out, don't speak Spanish. Many speak Hindi and Urdu.

The Third World will be out of oil in 2007. But this will not cause economic dislocations since pollution by then will be such that all South American, Asian, and African rivers and most of their coastal waters will be flammable and may be burned as energy sources.

Another effect of pollution will be that all Third World wildlife which hasn't been eaten will be dead. There will be no more elephants, rhinos, or lions except in zoos (where most college-educated people will also be confined). On the bright side, mutations caused by the disappearance of the ozone layer and high levels of carbon monoxide in the atmosphere will result in new forms of wildlife such as fifty-foot boll weevils and mealy worms the size of Amtrak trains.

Insects will be given a seat at the U.N. where they will vote with the Communist Bloc on most issues, especially increasing farm subsidies in the U.S.

The Third World nations will continue to gain influence in international organizations such as the Olympic Committee. As a result, a number of new sports will be added to Olympic competition—street begging, student rioting, and hostage murder (originally a demonstration event at the 1972 Olympics in Munich).

Another upbeat trend will be the gradual elimination of the international narcotics traffic. As the entire world becomes lethargic, larcenous, mentally disconnected, and given to fits of violent rage, there won't be any need for drugs.

But other Third World health problems will persist, malnutrition being the worst because there will never be quite enough of it to eliminate the other Third World diseases. Public-spirited types will form Malnutrition-Aid organizations to raise money to go take food away from the underdeveloped world's burgeoning mass of ignorant, crazy, and ungovernable AIDS-fodder. But it will be too little, too late.

Bizarre maladies will continue to spawn in the developing countries. We're all hoping for one that kills only lawyers. And Third World values and aesthetics will also come to permeate the globe, causing a welcome respite from feminism and bringing spray paint to the fore as the principal medium of expression in literature and the arts.

But in the next score of years the most dramatic single change in the Third World will be the United States becoming a part of it. We are already well on our way. Many of our cities are indistinguishable, in large part, from Beirut. The manners, dress, and grammar of our young people have a decidedly underdeveloped cast. And most of our intellectuals have belonged to "lesser breeds without the law" for ages. All we have to do now is elect a few more Democrats. ☐

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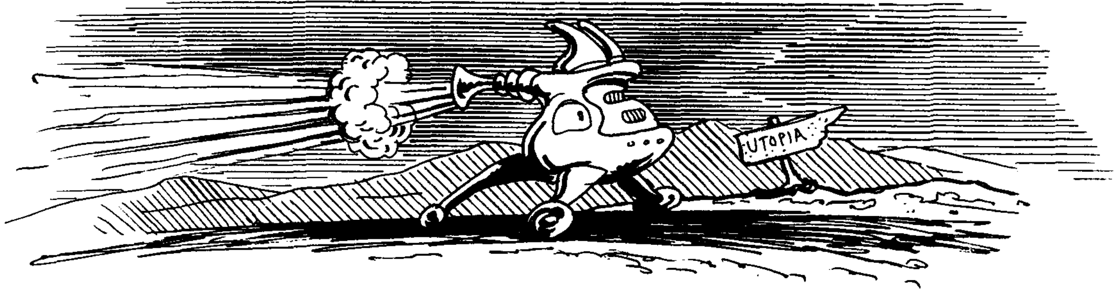
## *Brock Yates*/The Automobile



# THE LOVE AFFAIR CONTINUES

Let us take a peek twenty years down the road. But be forewarned; the view is fog-shrouded and the route is laced with unseen hollows and hairpin curves that can send the traveler spinning into the weeds. Such are the hazards of prognostication and I will therefore qualify what follows with a disclaimer: Futurism is bunk. Anyone who seriously believes that mortal man can see much beyond his own nose is likely to be a closet devotee of Edgar Cayce and Joe Granville while remaining slightly woozy from the heady vapors of the Harmonic Convergence.

That caveat thus recorded, let us proceed. For openers, barring the intervention of worldwide war or depression, it is a solid bet that the automobile will be with us two decades hence. A massive study of the subject in 1984 by a research team from MIT produced perhaps the most thorough and unbiased examination yet published of the automobile and its future. It was titled, appropriately enough, "The Future of the Automobile," and it concluded: "Overall the team is optimistic about the automobile's prospects, not only because of sustained demand, but also because cars have proved to be highly adaptable to changing conditions. Just in the last five years they have been made safer, more fuel-efficient and less polluting. And new technologies offer the promise of providing even more flexibility in meeting shifting tastes and concerns among consumers."

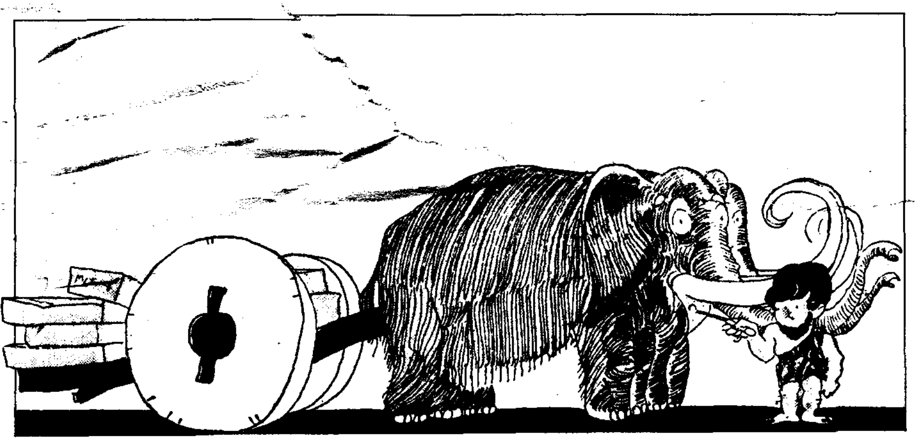
Despite attempts by some social engineers and visionaries to displace the classic, four-wheeled, gasoline-powered automobile with everything from subways and moving sidewalks to Bucky Fuller's idiotic Dymaxion three-wheeled whale, the basic layout remains inviolate. No one has conceived—or is likely to conceive—a platform more universally stable than four wheels, nor is the cheap, recently sanitized, highly efficient internal combustion gasoline engine about to disappear. (Although some scientists believe that breakthroughs in super-conductivity may offer new life to electric-powered cars, which are now hamstrung by gruesomely heavy and short-lived storage batteries.)

Lee Iacocca, a man elevated to guru status with his creation of the "new" Chrysler Corporation, recently expounded on the subject thusly: "I gave a speech in 1965 about what a car would be like in twenty years. I said it will have four wheels, it will be a thousand pounds lighter, it will carry a sophisticated version of the internal combustion engine and it won't have a spare tire. I missed on the last one, but I was right about the rest. I said there wouldn't be any electric cars, the diesel wouldn't be important, and we would not have the problem of the turbine solved. I underestimated the importance of microprocessors, as we all did. Otherwise the prediction was pretty accurate. And you know what? I'd give that same speech today."

Iacocca is right about microprocessing. That technology has been the savior of the modern automobile, which was headed toward oblivion during the 1970s. The environmental and consumerist loonies were at full cry and centering much of their hysteria on the demon car. A combination of draconian safety and exhaust-emission regulations, coupled with demands for high-mileage in the face of OPEC's rise, threatened to force manufacturers toward the creation of cars so underpowered as to border on the useless. Then came computer technology that offered exotic, electronic fuel-injection systems and suddenly, within five years, enormously powerful, clean, and fuel-efficient engines were infesting the market. Any number of automobiles, from tiny Honda Civic Si's to husky Cadillac Seville El Dorados now produce nearly one horsepower per-cubic-inch of engine displacement, an efficiency figure unheard of outside specially modified racing engines a decade ago.

The age of computers has not only infused new life into the old internal combustion engine, but has permitted designers to create radical drivetrains; i.e., such exotica as four-wheel-drive that will adjust to changing road conditions, four-wheel steering, and anti-locking brakes. Moreover, electronic brains permitted the development of slippery, aerodynamically pure body shapes, now being fabricated out of light, strong, durable plastic composites rather than traditional ferrous metal alloys.

Rigid body structures, electronically controlled engines and braking systems, wind-cheating bodies, etc., have created automobiles that are faster, safer, better handling, and more reliable than anything imaginable even a few years ago. Despite the bleatings from the Naderites, the modern automobile has become a responsible member of society, what with exhaust emissions at acceptable levels and highway fatality rates below two per 100 million miles traveled. (The neo-Luddites would have you believe that over 40,000 of us die on the roads in cars each year, but that is an unconscionable distortion. That bloated total includes pedestrians, farm machinery, motorcycles, and trucks. The number who actually die while riding in passenger cars is less than 25,000 annually, and half of them are victims of alcohol in one way or another.)



The cars we will drive twenty years hence will be about the same size as current mid-size models, say 170-180 inches overall, with capacity for four to five adults. They will be much lighter, in the neighborhood of 2,000 pounds, and will likely have such goodies as computer-controlled suspension that compensates for ride height, ride stiffness, and so on, depending on driving conditions, and variable-ratio friction clutches (CVT's) that will be linked, via closed-loop microprocessors, to the engine. Instrumentation will be a combination of electronic analogue units that will transmit salient information to the driver without the moronic video game displays currently in vogue on some models.

The automobiles of the future will surely be safer, thanks to improved crashworthiness of the body structures, better passenger packaging, no doubt involving passive restraints (much to the outrage of unreconstructed libertarians). The possibility of on-board accident avoidance radar which, coupled with ABS brakes and four-wheel-drive (perhaps operating through hydrostatic drives involving small hydraulic motors at each wheel), will offer superb roadholding and evasive capability.

But who will build these wonderful machines? The United States? Europe? Japan? The Third World? In 1949 America built nearly 80 percent of all the automobiles on the globe. Today that figure has slipped below 30 percent. Europe leads in technology, but its industry is threatened by Asian manufacturers and only EEC barriers

*Brock Yates is a columnist for the* Washington Post *and* Car and Driver.

keep the invaders at bay. Japan was until recently considered to be the supreme threat, but they are now being assaulted by the Koreans, the Taiwanese, the Malaysians, the Brazilians, and even the Mexicans. Most experts believe that the world automobile industry will be distilled into perhaps six monster, multinational consortiums with a few major "niche" builders like Porsche, Jaguar, Rolls Royce, Ferrari, and Saab filling the gaps that are bound to appear in a mass market. But at present the worldwide industry is in a state of flux and no one, including the most prescient observers and analysts, dares to guess where, when, and how any stability is likely to appear. Let it be said that the current Pontiac LeMans, which is a German Opel design built in South Korea by Daewoo Industries and sold in apple-pie American dealerships, represents the wave of the future in automobile marketing and manufacturing.

More complex yet is the question of where people will drive these wondrous new machines. There are currently about 500 million passenger cars in the world and they are multiplying like bacteria. Nothing, including efficient mass transit systems, high taxation, Cro-Magnon Communist social engineering, or even the absence of roads, can stifle the urge for automobiles. Japan, which has some of the highest traffic densities in the civilized world, has a booming domestic industry. Car-clogged Los Angeles, where freeway traffic oozes along at less than 20 mph and people blaze away at each other with semi-automatic weapons, is still the most active and lucrative car market on earth. Londoners enjoy one of the finest commuter rail systems of any major city, yet hundreds of thousands of otherwise sensible citizens daily endure hours of snail-paced traffic in the privacy of their own automobiles as opposed to the bee-hive compartments of a railroad car.

The automobile is the ultimate statement of personal freedom. It transcends all social boundaries and nothing, including the periodic stampeding of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, dampens universal ardor for ownership.

But when does the potential for total urban gridlock overwhelm the needs for individual privacy and expression? That question is being asked in places like Los Angeles, Tokyo, and a hundred other major metropolitan centers outside the Iron Curtain (where the miracle workers of Marxism have craftily avoided the problem by ossifying their economies). There are no clear answers. The nightmares of a rigid, collectivist system aside, there is little a free society can do to control the antlike invasion of the car. Alternate working hours such as those instituted with great success during the Los Angeles Olympics might work, as will computer-controlled access to freeways, stiff center-city parking fees, and improved mass transit, but there seems to be nothing that will persuade the average driver to abandon his car as a basic transportation device.

Rather than see the automobile diminish in use, we may see the converse; the function of the car expanded to operate as a rolling office. Already the cellular phone systems of most large cities are operating beyond projected capacity because businessmen are engaging in commerce from behind their steering wheels. Surely the development of on-board computer terminals and other sophisticated rolling technology will permit all manner of business to be undertaken not in the home, but inside automobiles; many of them mired in mile-long traffic jams.

To be sure, the car of the future will be a wonderful technological achievement; faster, safer, and more efficient than anything we know today. But the question nags: Will there be any empty space in which to drive it? Moreover, will anyone care? ☐

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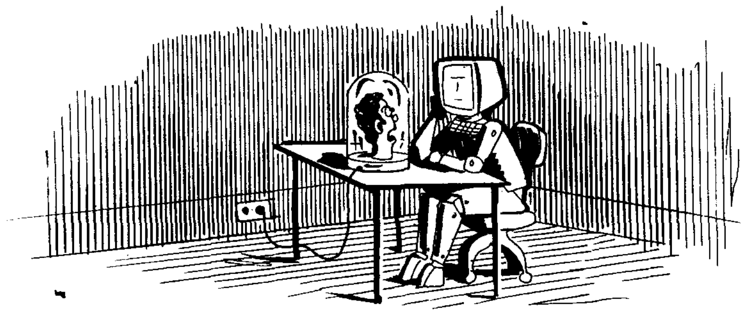
***Brit Hume*/The Personal Computer**



# HACK AWAY

In the year 2007, it is not hard to imagine a scene in which children are taken aside by a grandparent and shown a gray box.

*Brit Hume, a national correspondent for ABC News, is also a computer columnist for The Washington Post Writers Group.*

"What's that?" a child will ask.

"That's an IBM PC. It came out in 1981. It wasn't the first personal computer, but it was the first one that got millions of people to start using it."

"How did you talk to it?"

"You couldn't. You had to type commands in from the keyboard. And you had to store everything on what were called floppy disks. They didn't hold much information and the disk drives were terribly slow. They had what were called hard disks that were much faster, but sooner or later they always broke down. You could fix them, but you always lost all your data. So there were all kinds of devices just for backup purposes. And the programs in those days were constantly being changed. Updated, they called it. But you always felt like you were learning the thing all over again. And there were dozens of different programs for every use. People were very passionate about whatever computer or program they used being the best. Exchanging data from one computer to another or even from one program to another was a big problem."

"What a mess."

"Well, it was confusing, but very exciting. You'd go to a newsstand and there'd be sixty different magazines about computers. And some of the magazines were so thick with ads you'd worry that if you dropped it on your foot, you'd end up in the hospital."

"How much did a computer cost back then?"

"Even some of the cheaper ones cost more than the fanciest televisions. And the more expensive models cost more than some cars."

The point of the foregoing is this: the personal computer, now barely a decade old, is still in its infancy. Given its astonishing growth and change in ten years, it is impossible to predict what it will look like in another twenty. Still, a few things seem clear. Certainly, the typical system will pack processing power and speed far in excess of the most potent desktop machines of today, and will cost no more. And a basic system will be much smaller than the unwieldy boxes that hog desk space today.

Computer programs for conventional uses—word processing, database management, spreadsheet planning or accounting—will be standardized. If you know one, you will know them all. What's more, they will be easier to use. No arcane commands. Plain English phrases will be accepted, probably by voice as well as by keyboard, or by a pointing device, like a mouse, or even your own finger on the screen. Sorting a database, recalculating a spreadsheet, or finding and replacing a phrase in a body of text will be virtually instantaneous, even when dealing with massive amounts of data.

The distinctions between programs will vanish. Your machine is likely to bring you a blank screen on which you can enter numbers, or draw or write. If what you create is a spreadsheet, or a poem, or the design of a rocket engine, or the first page of a newsletter, the software will understand. The images on your monitor, be they text or the rich color graphics of some game, will be of photographic quality. The Flight Simulator of the year 2007 will be so realistic both in video and sound that if you can master it, you may be able to fly a small plane without a single lesson.

Data storage will be on optical disk or similar media of such massive capacity that every home and office will have all its standard reference works stored on one disk. Getting more—say everything that ever appeared in the *New York Times*—will require another disk or so. You'll be able to check them out of the library. Research will involve nothing more than a keystroke (or more likely, a voice command) that will open a window on your screen. You say—"computer." A definition of the word will appear almost instantaneously. You refine it to "personal computer." An encyclopedia article will appear. You can scroll through it, looking for what you want. Or print the whole thing out. Or ask for more information in a particular area. Each request is answered immediately by more information which you can follow wherever you want. Meanwhile, whatever else your computer is doing—recalculating a spreadsheet, or bringing in data from some remote source on an optical data line—

*(continued on page 59)*

**Spearheading The Recovery Of Traditional Values**

If you think mindless radicalism has made of mess of society, schools, the economy, and our political institutions, you should see what it's doing to our churches. Formerly dignified and beautiful, America's major religious bodies are being run into the ground by middle-aged hippies who don't care what their vanishing parishioners think.

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can continue while you pursue your research.

These are just safe guesses based on technology that already exists, but remains to be refined and mass produced. It is mass production, of course, which brings prices down. And prices of computer products have been falling for several years, so much so that IBM, which hates price competition, has all but abandoned the low end of the personal computer market. It is now dominated by the makers of the so-called "clones," machines that perform like IBM models, but cost less. The clone makers rely heavily on hardware made in the Orient. That has led to a lot of hand-wringing in this country about the loss of American leadership in an industry we started. But it is not America's manufacturing prowess that has given this country leadership in the personal computer industry. It is, rather, American imagination and ingenuity in developing the software without which computers are useless. That leadership remains strong today, but whether it will be in twenty years is less certain.

The big names in the software business these days are firms like Lotus Development Corporation, makers of the famous 1-2-3 spreadsheet program, and Ashton-Tate, maker of dBase III, the industry-standard database program. Biggest of all is Microsoft. It has a full line of business software. More importantly, Microsoft makes the basic software operating system for the IBM line of PCs. Microsoft is busy these days on a new and long-awaited version of the IBM operating system that will enable software developers to tap the full potential of the latest processing chips. That, in turn, will mean new software capable of using more memory and performing numerous tasks at once.

A similar progression is underway in the world of Apple computers and software, which is at present the only major competition to the IBM-standard. Indeed, in many respects, Apple has been more innovative than IBM. The Apple Macintosh, for instance, pioneered the use of the "graphical interface" where the computer can be controlled by moving an arrow around the screen with a mouse rather than typing in arcane commands. It is now being imitated by IBM and Microsoft. Meanwhile, Apple has hurried to adapt its newer Macintoshes to hard disks and expansion boards. The IBM machines, and their copies, were designed with such hardware add-ons in mind. Both IBM and the Apple Macintosh have their passionate adherents, but their worlds are inexorably merging.

All this is natural and predictable, the kind of progress large corporations like IBM and Apple, and the big software houses, are comfortable with. It is also the kind of gradual change that business customers are comfortable with. Businesses typically treat personal computers as office automation equipment to be used by clerical personnel who must be trained at company expense. Major changes in software mean extensive and expensive retraining. And it is the business customer that everybody wants, because companies think nothing of spending $400 for a single copy of a computer program that may have cost only a fraction of that to produce. As a result, a cottage industry that began in a garage and was only a decade ago the province of hobbyists and hackers has now become a full-fledged, maturing, and increasingly conservative major industry. It now is moving ahead in careful incremental steps, the kind that can be planned and managed and marketed and sold to stockholders and boards of directors.

This will mean a thriving, increasingly stable commerce that will provide many jobs and much growth in the next twenty years. But the question is whether this increasingly corporate culture will foster the kind of invention and breakthrough that has produced explosive growth in the personal computer industry so far.

Fortunately, not all elements of the computer industry have gotten so corporate. The hobbyists and hackers who started the personal computer revolution are still out there, as active as ever. Only today they are more numerous and have more tools. Programming software that used to cost $500 or more can now be had for a fraction of that. For example, Borland International, headed by a hacker turned software entrepreneur named Philippe Kahn, sells its Turbo-Pascal editor and compiler for $100, less by mail-order discount. An estimated 750,000 people now use it. There are other languages, but Turbo-Pascal alone has resulted in a harvest of astonishingly good homemade software which authors either give away, or distribute as "shareware." Shareware is a unique marketing technique in which copyrighted programs are passed out free with a message requesting those who use the software to please send money.

You can get shareware from computer user groups or from the thousands of computer bulletin boards across the country. A bulletin board is simply a computer with modem which is dedicated to receiving calls from other computers. Bulletin boards are storehouses of messages and free software. The people who frequent or operate bulletin boards, who moonlight writing software or tinker with computers in their basements are today's guardians of the fabled hacker tradition that gave birth to the personal computer. They share a passion for the computer, not as an office tool but as an instrument of their imagination. They are thrilled by its power and motivated to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with others. Some would like to make money from what they do, but most would keep on doing it because they can't help it.

It is possible, of course, that the most exciting developments in personal computing over the next twenty years will come from the established companies. Apple recently introduced a wonderfully powerful yet friendly new database program called Hypercard which it is now building into all new Macintoshes. Current owners can get it for $50. It was developed by a single employee who was freed from other tasks to do it. But the hallmark of Apple management in recent years has not been innovation. It has been the refinement of the Mac, once regarded as a quirky little computer ill-suited to business use, into a more conventional, IBM-like system. And it's worth remembering that Steven Wozniak, the man who developed the original Apple, was working for Hewlett-Packard at the time. He offered to develop this new computer for H-P, but the company wasn't interested. It actually gave him a release to do it on his own. Now Hewlett-Packard is fighting for market share with its pricey IBM copies and, oblivious to the irony, billing itself in TV ads as the firm "that never stops asking What if?"

Personal computing is much more mature as an industry than as a technology. Competition is still fierce, but where there were once many different systems, now there are only two and before long their differences will blur. There are a lot of companies, but there are also a lot of bankruptcies and a lot of mergers. The industry's copyright battles over the "look and feel" of software and "user interfaces" reflect the urge of vendors to standardize, not diversify. In this atmosphere, it seems unlikely the hired hands who brought us Lotus 1-2-3 release 2 and the IBM Personal System 2 will bring us release 1 of the next breakthrough product. For that we must look to the countless hobbyists, hardware hackers, computer nerds, and software moonlighters out there bent over their computers because they'd rather be there than anywhere else. They still have the passion to dream and the freedom to experiment. They are the ones who are really still asking, "What if?" ☐

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# OUR OLDEST PROFESSION

Two things may be said with absolute certainty about our nation's press in 2007. No fourteen-part series, no op-ed piece, no lead editorial, no question-and-answer, no sidebar, analysis, book review, business forecast, sports wrap-up, humor column, health page, movie review, or publisher's letter to readers will begin, "By the year 2000 . . ."

For that we can offer some thanks, with relief. By the year 2000, we shall no doubt have learned: the population bomb will have finally exploded, the information revolution will fully be upon us, half of Americans will be healthier but not happier, the other hundred million will be happier but not healthier, Soviet women will be increasingly fashion-conscious, South African progressives will be close to despair, the Roman Catholic Church will be wrestling with change, our family farmers will be in crisis, the welfare system will cry out for reform—all in this complex and globally-interknit world.

That much will be known.

The other certainty is that the American press will be subject, in some form or other, to chilling effects on its freedom to print. Now, of course, it is the liability crisis that has had a chilling effect on the lively and once-healthy investigative tradition in American reporting. Indeed, the temperature has dropped so low in some places that certain publications are even practicing a disturbing form of self-censorship from fear of litigation—employing the judicial system, it might be said, as a substitute for what used to be called editorial judgment and discretion.

Chilling effects, after all, are usually self-perceived. The Washington press corps, for example, seems actually to believe that the number and frequency of presidential news conferences has something to do with the quality and quantity of usable knowledge.

Of course, the opposite is true: voluble Presidents are usually the least informative, and Ronald Reagan's infrequent appearances are far more abundant with grist for the mill. His lapses, gaffes, indiscretions, perceived insensitivities, flip-flops, and departures from orthodox opinion have given more than one bureau chief a second career analyzing the chilling effects of such executive ineptitude on our First Amendment privileges, the safety of civil liberties, the integrity of politics, and the inalienable right of a free and independent press to make partisan points by subjective means with fictional sources, not for attribution.

Those are the certainties; the rest is speculation.

To reach ahead twenty years, the interested observer need only look behind. Two decades ago, NATO was in crisis, young people were feeling restless and disaffected, old people sensed they were forgotten and scorned, scoundrels were plentiful while heroes were scarce, the scales of justice were unevenly weighted, growth was explosive, indiscriminate, unforeseen, unplanned, and in chaos, schools were passing students but failing society.

Half the world went to bed hungry; the other half enjoyed the miracle of television. The British dominated Broadway, Broadway was a shadow of its former self, Times Square was uninhabitable, the South was on the rebound, California led the nation, craftsmen were disappearing (and their skills were going with them), standards had fallen while revenues had risen, Americans yearned for a simpler, easier, earlier time.

All of these observations will be made, and at considerably longer length, in the year 2007. Twenty years ago, reporters were still generally called reporters, and journalism was a vocation, or trade. Police reporters still phoned in names and let desk men write their stories; drama critics were failed actors, court reporters were policemen *manqués*, headlines described the stories, not the writers of headlines, and Walter Lippmann appeared on the editorial page.

Today, as it happens, Walter Lippmann is all over the newspaper. It is safe to assume that all reporters are journalists, all journalists are professionals, and the purpose of the profession is to illuminate our complex, interdependent world for readers who are otherwise paralyzed and confused by the onslaught of data, imagery, video, audio, trivia, and numbers in which the information revolution has buried us chin deep.

That is why the nine-part series of 1987 will no doubt become the nineteen-part series of 2007—or better yet, given the advances in printing technology, what would now be spread out

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*Philip Terzian, a contributor since 1975, is the deputy editorial page editor of the* Providence Journal.

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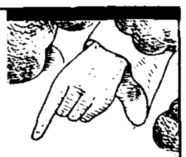

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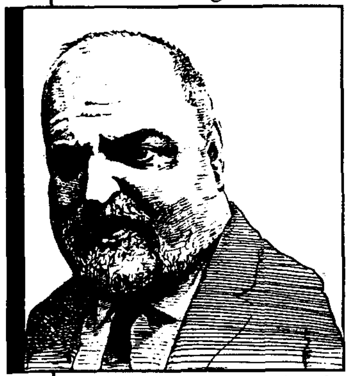

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over two weeks of tedium might then be made a supplement or section to itself.

The topics are not difficult to imagine: "The Changing Face of Judaism," "Women Prisoners Speak Out," "Yearning to Breathe Free: An Immigrant's Odyssey," "Who Gets Insured," "Gay in Ohio," "Journey to the People's Republic," "National Security: Bigger Isn't Better," "The Gift to Be Simple: Shakers Remember," "Living With the Bomb," "Report Card on the Colleges," "Crisis in Day Care: What About the Children?"

Newspapers may read the same, but it is uncertain whether they will look the same, too. The appearance of newspapers now is not radically different from two decades in the past; Allen Neuharth, however, has clouded the future. The remarkable fact about *USA Today* is not that it has succeeded in its primary aims—to gain readership and make money—but that it has been nearly as influential as it has been profitable.

Who would have thought that the least instructive aspects of the nation's most superficial newspaper would be eagerly adopted by publications that had somehow prevailed before the invention of McPaper? Sports pages now feature color pictures of teenaged archers; front pages now look like Monopoly boards. Even the single most salutary editorial reform in modern journalism—the gradual decline and eradication of the man-in-the-street interview—seems on the verge of being undone. The inquiring photographer is lurking among us; Jacqueline Bouvier is once again in fashion.

This presents a Disneyesque vision of the press of 2007: a world of audience participation, columnists in clown suits, animation, adaptation, cartoon versions. The Neuharthian bubble is likely to burst—even *PM* finally went out of business—but the besetting sin of journalism is precedent, not sensation. Once the ethic has taken root, it is difficult to dislodge, and because the presumptions of one generation are passed on to the next in the costume of principle, it may be supposed that the commercial success of *USA Today* is likely to be translated into editorial law.

Just as William Randolph Hearst taught that contests raise circulation, or Benjamin Bradlee demonstrated that gossip can be proved by simple publication, so *USA Today* has persuaded its brethren that color is important, statistics tell the story, and people purchase newspapers that catch their eye on newsstands.

People buy newspapers, but people make them, too, and it is reasonable to suppose that while the juvenile writers of today will be transformed into the world-weary editors of tomorrow, the problems that populate the newsroom will proliferate in twenty years. Those with a mind to change things now will find to their dismay that things can't be changed.

For example, it is a safe wager that between four and six conferences will be held during 2007 to examine the scandalously low rate of minority hiring, and minority retention, in American newspapers.

Demographics being what they are, no one really knows what a minority might be, but it is certain that the proportion of X's in American society will not be matched by equal numbers on any newsroom floor. This will be variously ascribed to racism, sexism, chauvinism, the madonna-whore complex, the Protestant ethic, or selfishness and greed. Alas, Phil Donahue will have retired by 2007, but the John F. Kennedy School of Government will still furnish conference rooms and auditorium space for lamentations, exhortations, confessions of guilt, and pledges of reform.

Similarly, when the *New York Times Magazine* publishes the diary of an orderly in an AIDS hospice, and discovers to its comparative dismay that the orderly is in fact a graduate student in semiotics who has based his imaginative account on the composite recollections of certain friends, and friends of other friends, the *Times* will write an eloquent editorial explaining all this to readers, but the Times Company will underwrite a symposium on ethics at the Columbia School of Journalism.

There will be gathered the editors of the *Times*, the *Washington Herald*, the *Philadelphia Record*, the *Los Angeles Daily Mirror*, the *Cleveland Press*, and the *National Observer*. Each will confess that such a story could have been published in her newspaper, but that the first duty of any journalist is to the truth—and that the bond uniting readers and writers is the maintenance of standards and assurance of integrity: "We not only betray our readers when we injure that faith," one will say, "but worst of all, we victimize ourselves by needless, self-deception."

How true—and how important one last suggestion might prove. This is the year that Eugene Patterson, chairman of the *St. Petersburg Times*, has begun the measured process of laying down his burden. It will not be an easy task, for Mr. Patterson's burden is nearly as formidable as his tidy reputation. Editor, publisher, chairman of the board, and CEO, Mr. Patterson is also a doyen of the Pulitzer Prize board, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the ASNE Foundation, the Society of Professional Journalists (Sigma Delta Chi), the American Press Institute, the Poynter Institute for Media Studies—not to mention four years' service on the Civil Rights Commission.

If American journalism has enjoyed the benefits of a pontificator-general, it has Mr. Patterson to thank for his services to duty. No congressional hearings on freedom of information have been complete without him; no crisis of confidence is endured without his counsel. Seminars and conventions have grown accustomed to his face; connoisseurs of forewords are familiar with his words.

But after Patterson, who? A model is not hard to discern: the editor, or retired editor, of a provincial metropolitan newspaper, more admired than read, less impressive than its prestige might otherwise suggest. Certain obvious candidates spring quickly to mind—Thomas Winship, Michael Gartner, Reg Murphy, Gene Roberts, John Seigenthaler—and it may even prove that one strides to the front.

Yet just as Patterson's anointment was informal and offhand, it is likely his successor bears the burden alone. There is an object for 2007: electing a pontificator-general of the press.

Journalism does not need talent, education, imagination, or variety; it is not wanting for money, threatened by the Japanese, falling into disuse, or losing its way. It is, however, in desperate need of a constitutional monarch, a signer of messages, cutter of ribbons, deliverer of speeches, ceremonial recipient of honorary degrees. All those journalism schools in search of a provost; all those newsroom funerals that could use an oration; all those episodes of "Nightline" and presidential panels.

Who better to guide the birdcage liners as they find their way in the twenty-first century—to hearten reporters, to succor the media, to nourish foundations—than a pope of opinion, the pontiff of the press? ☐

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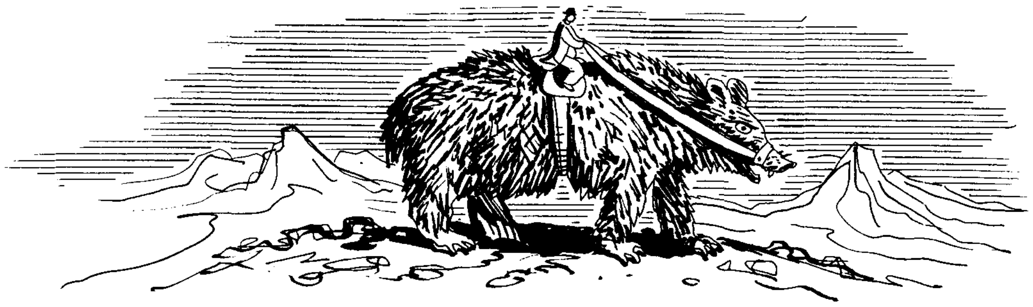


# A LONELY VISIONARY

"Sorry to bother you, but haven't we met before? Aren't you . . . what's his name?"

"I doubt you'd know my name," he said. "Nobody does these days."

There was a trace of bitterness in his voice, just enough to prod my curiosity. On the whole, he was quite an ordinary looking old man, around 75 I would guess, with a flabby face and a bald head. But there, right on the top of his forehead, was the painfully familiar huge purple mark resembling the outlines of some exotic land on the globe. Perhaps South America, or even India. . . . I could swear I'd seen him before.

We were sitting in a bar on Fisherman's Wharf, the most crowded spot in San Francisco, where you can run across anybody from this or the next world. California, as you know, has the reputation of a weird planet: if there are ghosts, this is their homeland. There is no way of knowing who you might see across the table. Was this fellow one of Hollywood's old faces, a character from a great but unjustly forgotten movie? He looked a bit like Edward G. Robinson, or someone from "The Untouchables."

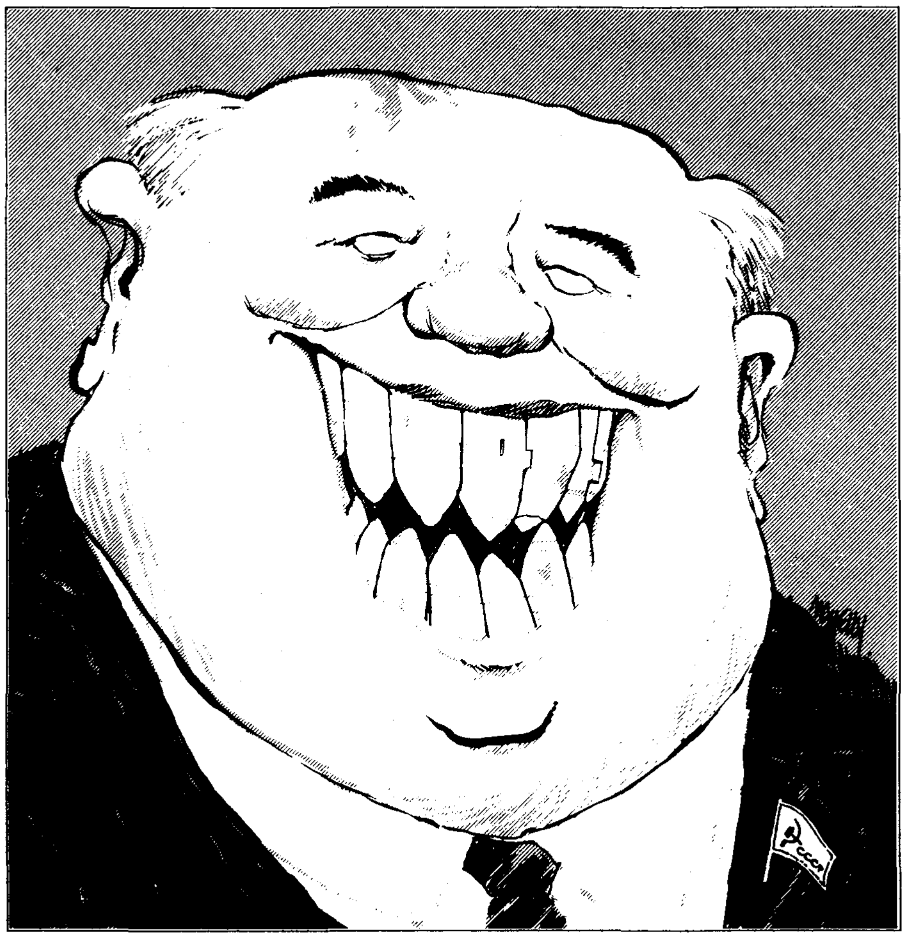
"Have I seen you on television?"

"Yeah, sure, television." He was obviously annoyed. "Plenty of times. And even on the cover of *Time* magazine. All you people know here is television and *Time* magazine. And if by some chance your face doesn't appear on television for two weeks, you're as good as dead. Finished, forgotten, condemned to oblivion. Don't bother to recall my name, young man. I know, it's beyond your ability anyway. But don't say you don't remember the story. THE STORY! I am the one and only General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union ever to defect to the West. Does this ring a bell?"

To say I felt ashamed would be a gross understatement. I was devastated. How could I not recognize him? There he was in all his glory, Comrade Gorbachev, sitting right in front of me, drinking a vodka-tonic and in a very angry mood. That mark on his forehead. . . . What an idiot I am. Defection. How many times have I told myself never to speak to strangers in California?

Of course I remembered every detail of that spectacular affair, as if it took place yesterday. Was it fifteen years ago, or seventeen? No, it had to be more. Right, it was 1988, the last year of Reagan's presidency. It happened at the Gorbachev-Reagan summit meeting in Washington, D.C.: the "first Soviet couple" suddenly asked for political asylum right in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. There was total confusion, complete chaos. Reagan first thought it was a joke and repeated it (off the record) to reporters—those crazy Russians with their black humor! But the couple insisted and refused to leave, hiding away from their own retinue somewhere inside the Old Executive Office Building.

Then there was great embarrassment and even panic: what about East-West relations? Above all, who the hell was going to sign the arms control agreement that was the whole point of the summit? Those damn Russkis! Couldn't they have waited until the deal was signed? Under pressure from Congress, Reagan's cabinet split over whether to accept the defection, and for a while the official version had it that the guests had fallen ill. The Soviets naturally offered to send their own medical team with intensive care equipment to set things aright, but the couple barricaded themselves in one of the OEOB offices together with Nancy, who came to negotiate a peaceful solution.



Meanwhile, the press got a whiff that something really big was going on, particularly after a security guard leaked the story to the *Washington Times* for $1 million. Infuriated by the cover-up, reporters demanded explanations and practically besieged the White House. Nobody could get in or out without being closely examined by the reporters. A huge crowd gathered outside, blocking all traffic, and grew into the thousands by sundown. The bets were one in ten that the couple would stay.

By morning, seeing the cat was out of the bag anyway, the Soviets claimed their leader had been abducted and they threatened to retaliate. Both sides went on nuclear alert, but a showdown was averted just in time: the defecting couple, pale and trembling, appeared before the press, hand in hand, and confirmed that they had indeed "chosen freedom." This is how the world saw them on the news that night.

For a while, they were all over the place, on every talk show and news hour. They were incredibly popular. There was a pop-song, "Gorby's Gonna Stay," by Huey Lewis; there were T-shirts, badges, even a fantastic docudrama called *Escape from the Kremlin.* Gorbachev was played by a magnificent young blond with blue eyes and a California suntan, though his role was secondary to that of his wife Raisa, played by Jane Fonda, who was clearly the main figure in the Kremlin and the mastermind of their escape—done, as she convinced the slightly dull but honest Gorby, to save humanity from nuclear holocaust. All he had to do was knock off a few of his colleagues from the Politburo, which he did in style. The ending was truly touching: the two of them, young and beautiful, appear on the steps of the White House before a jubilant crowd. I was quite moved the first time I saw it.

But then came the presidential elections with their usual razzle-dazzle and our "first couple" soon became yester-

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*Vladimir Bukovsky, a contributor since 1980, left the Soviet Union in 1976 after twelve years in Soviet prisons, labor camps, and psychiatric "hospitals." He is the author of* To Build a Castle: My Life as a Dissenter *and, most recently,* To Choose Freedom *(Hoover Institution Press).*

day's news. Somehow, they never did explain properly why they defected. Surely not because of the swimming pools Reagan had shown them during a helicopter ride over suburban Washington.

"You see," the old man now told me, "by the time we left for Washington, my reform was in a state of chaos. You may remember that it had three parts: *perestroika* (restructuring), *uskorenie* (acceleration), and *glasnost* (openness), and they were designed in precisely that order. In reality, we did achieve dramatic *uskorenie*, but we did not quite manage to pull off the *perestroika*—and all this, mind you, in an atmosphere of complete *glasnost*. Now, can you imagine what that meant? Who needs *uskorenie* without *perestroika*, when *glasnost* allows every fool in the country to see it? It's like pedaling a bicycle without wheels, faster and faster, in the middle of a jeering crowd. And why, you may ask, did we fail? Because, on the one hand, the Party wanted only *uskorenie* and did not want to hear anything about either *perestroika* or *glasnost*. On the other hand, the military and the technocrats wanted *perestroika*, but nothing else, while the people were all for *glasnost*, and to hell with *perestroika* and *uskorenie*.

"So, it is easy to see that, given this correlation of forces in the country, we finally got *uskorenie* of *glasnost*, instead of *uskorenie* of *perestroika*. Although it might have pleased the people, it was certainly bad for the Party and the military and, therefore, very dangerous for me. On top of that, there was this damned arms control agreement with Reagan after which there was no hope for *perestroika*, while we stuck with *uskorenie* of *glasnost*. I simply could not go back home after signing my death warrant.

"But how on earth could I explain any of this on a talk show or news program? Usually, I would barely have enough time to introduce the Marxist idea of basis and *nadstroika* (superstructure), and the show would be over. Yet, without any such explanation they simply couldn't understand that *uskorenie* of *glasnost* is just a *perestroika* of *nadstroika*, or should I say, a restructuring of the superstructure, while real progress is impossible without a *perestroika* of the basis. So I gave up. Raisa would chat with them about fashions and diets, and I'd just smile and nod."

"Wait a minute," I protested, "there were some serious TV programs in those days."

He smiled sardonically.

"Yeah, sure. Serious programs. I did find one, on prime time, one hour for all subjects. Ridiculous! I needed at *least* four hours, like at the Party Congress. But even that was better than the talk shows. Two wizards were leading the program: Mr. Indeed and Mr. Neither, Jim and Robin. Good evening, Jim. Good evening, Robin. They were doing all the talking. Who were they? Did they read Lenin? Did they know about basis and superstructure? No, but each had his own opinion. Very polite, very democratic: you have your opinion, I have mine. Idiots! I don't have opinions, I have knowledge. I told them what I knew. Do you agree, Jim? Neither do I, Robin. Indeed, Jim. Indeed, Robin.

"It was even worse with the so-called experts! They never argue, but if your opinion differs from theirs, they simply ignore you. Well, they say behind your back, he has a chip on his shoulder. He is a defector, isn't he? How can a defector be objective?

"Amazing, isn't it? When I was General Secretary, these very same people were all for 'talking' with me, for 'understanding' me, for 'building bridges' with me. Yet the moment I started to live among them, free to talk, they stopped being interested in understanding me, or talking with me, or building bridges. Am I different just because I am here?

"When I was General Secretary, they called me 'liberal,' they found me 'charismatic' and 'well-educated,' they praised my every word. Now, I am 'undemocratic,' 'dogmatic,' and 'unpleasant.'"

"Why didn't you write another book?" I asked.

"What's the point? You either write for a wide audience, and then it's trash, or you write seriously, and then nobody reads it except those who 'disagree' with you. I did write three volumes, explaining everything, but I still don't have a publisher. Anyway, Raisa wrote a book for both of us, *My Life in the Kremlin*, and it was a best-seller. Don't misunderstand me: I'm not complaining. We're quite rich, we have a nice swimming pool. But I wanted to explain. Except nobody would listen . . ."

He was getting drunk and maudlin. I looked around. A couple of elderly joggers passed by, wheezing and coughing—the last survivors of a twentieth-century craze. On the waterfront, a group of naked girls were noisily protesting against equal rights for women, as they do every day. All around us, a festively dressed crowd was eating fresh crab and shrimp.

"Do you regret what you did? Would you go back? They'd shoot you if you did, you know."

"Yeah, I know. But at least they remember me. And will remember, not like here. Anyway, what's the difference? I'm already buried alive."

"Why haven't you tried, then?"

"I have. But they don't want me back precisely because they have a good memory." He looked at me and smiled: "Don't you read the papers? They are about to sign another arms control agreement with the Americans."

Indeed, there had been something on television the day before about a new era of "absolute frankness and honesty" in the United Soviet Republics of Europe, but I hadn't paid much attention. Who the hell cares about those damned United Republics? ☐

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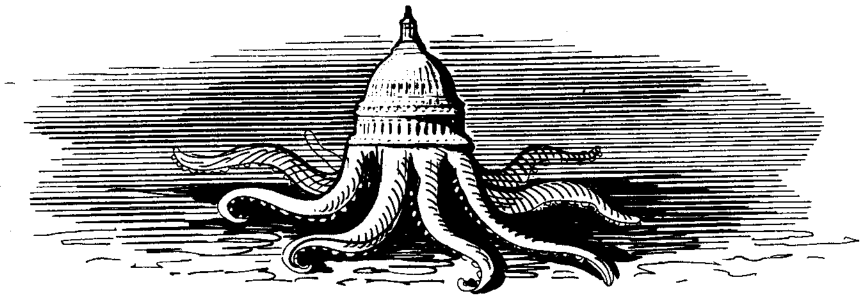
## *Fred Barnes*/Washington



# A WORLD APART

During the Senate Judiciary Committee's hearings on Robert Bork, Alan Simpson of Wyoming got to musing about the Saturday Night Massacre. (Come on, come on. You remember. That was the outrage that occurred in 1973 when special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox was fired and Attorney General Elliot Richardson and his deputy, William Ruckelshaus, quit.) In Washington, said Simpson, "we have only been talking about it for fourteen years. . . . Fourteen years. This is a curious place. If you go out in the land and say, 'What were you doing on the night of the Saturday Night Massacre,' a guy will say, 'What are you talking about?'" Not so in Washington, Simpson said. He moved his mouth close to the microphone and talked softly. "In this town when you say, 'What were you doing on the night of the Saturday Night Massacre,' they say, 'I was just finishing shaving. I was going out to dinner. I will never forget it my whole life. I went limp. My wife and I talked and huddled together and had a drink and just shuddered in shock.'"

Simpson caught the trend exactly. Folks in Washington are different. They have cut themselves off from the rest of the country, and they're glad they did. Their minds are absorbed by completely different matters: who said what on "Brinkley" last Sunday, who's up and who's down at the White House, what Rosty's got in mind for the kitchen utensil industry in the trade bill, etc. If you have to ask who Rosty is, you're either not from Washington or you live here but will never make it big. People in Washington know who Rosty, Henry, Novak, Meg, Elliott, Gorby, Tip, Tipper, Lou, Liddy, Jody, Mary, Cap, Lee, Brad, Ralph, Marlin, Lesley, and Jeane are. Sting, Alvin, Pee-wee, Pound Puppies, Bono, and the Littles—you might know these names, but most Washingtonians would have to ask.

Washington is increasingly insular, arrogant, elitist, power mad, addicted to luxury and mindless political combat, and, worst of all, downright hostile to the non-Washington masses. That's today. Now imagine Washington if the trend continues, and there's no reason to think it won't. From the window of my Washington office, I used to monitor the entrance to the Palm Restaurant, a mecca for power lunchers. Month by month as the mid-1980s wore on, I began to recognize more of the people eating there. They were Washington expense account junkies—Administration officials, lobbyists, journalists, consultants, think-tank heavies, Capitol Hill aides. Few normal people. In 2007, there won't be any real folks at all dining there, the Washington types having driven them far, far away.

I admit to ambivalence and hypocrisy on the subject of Washington. I grew up here and have no intention of leaving. I remember when Washington was referred to derisively as a "sleepy Southern town." This wasn't so long ago, the 1950s and early 1960s. Well, it was a better place then. It was more livable, and people who came to Washington with a new administration or as Capitol Hill aides often returned home a few years later. Now nobody goes home. Something happens to them when they get here, something right out of *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers.* It's as if large pods are put by newcomers' beds at night. By morning they've been taken over, heart, soul, and mind. By 2007, the pods will be triumphant.

At ground level in Washington, Ronald Reagan changed nothing. The irony of his presidency is that the more he railed against Washington, the more he made the city a magnet. Reagan didn't reduce the size of government. Even the odious Small Business Administration has survived. What Reagan did was glamorize Washington for a new breed of people, conservatives. Thousands have flocked to Washington, and they don't want to leave, ever. A good way to get the fisheye—it's happened to me many times—is to tell a young conservative who's interested in journalism that he or she ought to head for the hinterlands for a few years or maybe for life. They tune out that message. And now even *TAS* has come to Washington. And Irving Kristol.

Twenty years ago, Tom Wolfe wrote a great piece about working stiffs in New York City called "The Big League Complex." Cab drivers, doormen, waiters, delivery men, and cops there think they're tough and smart and better than rubes from the boondocks, and act accordingly. They think this because they live and work in a fast-paced city, the Big Apple. A similar complex is spreading like impetigo among the drones of Washington, especially journalists and congressional aides. A reporter may be doing a story on how Gramm-Rudman affects funding of Urban Development Action Grants and along the way run into a senator who calls him by his first name. The reporter's self-assessment soars. He thinks he's in the big leagues. Likewise, Senate and House aides figure they've arrived because they know the intricacies of some awful piece of legislation. Senators and representatives know their first names, too. In truth, busy work is engulfing Washington. There are now several hundred separate subcommittees in Congress, each holding hearings and churning out reports. In 2007, there will be more committees, more hearings, more reports. The illusion is that all of this is accomplishing something. The press completes the circle of self-importance by reporting on the hearings and citing the reports. Okay, there's some valuable work done, but only a little. Twenty years from now, the new mindset will have settled in: I do things that get in the press, therefore I am important.

Washington wasn't always the national center for electoral politics. Reagan ran his campaigns for the Republican presidential nominations out of Los Angeles. Jimmy Carter ran his out of Atlanta. In the 1988 presidential race, nearly all the campaigns have headquarters in Washington. Bruce Babbitt of Arizona has a big contingent here. Al Haig's campaign office is next door to the *Washington Post.* Jesse Jackson doesn't live in Washington, but his campaign staff does. And who is drawn into presidential campaigns these days? Mostly people in Washington. In the off-season, they work in Congress or as lobbyists or in a think tank. When the campaign starts, they join. Presidential campaigns have become a Washington industry. In a few years, Washington will have a monopoly on the business.

For congressional candidates, particularly incumbents, Washington offers one-stop shopping. Media consultants were once spread around the country, but the best ones have migrated to Washington. A recent example is Ray Strother, a very skilled operator who produced Gary Hart's TV spots in 1984. Pollsters have proliferated in Washington. Richard Wirthlin came with Reagan. Paul Maslin and Harrison Hickman are the hot new Democratic pollsters. Naturally, they're in Washington. Most significant of all, Washington is where most of the money is raised these days. Every night, senators and representatives have receptions that draw high-dollar lawyers, lobbyists, and envoys from political action committees. Checks are written. There's nothing illegal or immoral about this. It's just that it would be nice if members of Congress raised their campaign dough back home. Anyway, my fear is that an ineluctable force is at work, causing all pollsters, media

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*Fred Barnes, a contributor since 1980, is a senior editor of the* New Republic.

consultants, and strategists to slouch toward Washington.

What's wrong with running campaigns out of Washington? It tends to make the candidates, like everyone else in Washington, snug and smug inside the Beltway. Another ominous sign: the new television facilities on Capitol Hill that allow members to send shows back to their states and districts in lieu of going themselves. Sure, a lot of them go back regularly in spite of the TV studios. It makes for a hectic life, but at least these ones are in touch. Many in Congress aren't. In fact, most people in Washington are utterly out of sync with America, which is why they are repeatedly mystified by the political ebbs and flows outside the Beltway. The tax revolt of the late 1970s was a surprise to Washington. So was Reagan's victory in the 1980 election. So was his prolonged success and popularity in the White House. So was the reaction Ollie North touched off around the country when he testified before the Iran-contra committee last summer. The committee didn't know what hit it. Who would have guessed? Not Daniel Inouye or Warren Rudman. The picture the Washington crowd has of America is horribly distorted: tens of millions crazed with fear of AIDS and ready to lock up homosexuals, or anxious over the prospect that foreigners will stop buying Treasury bonds, or stomping mad because the Japanese insist on sending cheap, efficient products to the United States that they'll wind up buying.

By 2007, the Washington community should be practically homogenous. The distinction between the public and private sectors is already blurred, but twenty years from now it may have all but vanished. People shuttle back and forth between congressional and campaign jobs. They move easily between administrations and think tanks and law offices. And I'm not talking about liberals alone. Conservatives do the same in Washington. One day they are lobbyists, the next they are in the White House. Soon they'll be lobbyists again, only to return to government. The one thing they don't do is leave Washington. The most dexterous of Washingtonians manage to work in and out of government or in and out of presidential campaigns at the same time, a neat trick. Tom Korologos, a private lobbyist who also ran the White House's disastrous effort to get Bork confirmed, recently did it. Many Washington lawyers and consultants are active in campaigns without giving up their regular jobs. And so on.

Believe me, all this is not healthy. The folks in Washington have common interests, ones that aren't shared by the masses. Just the other day, a journalist I know was jogging. He ran into two acquaintances, also jogging, and they started arguing about Bork. Soon a car pulled alongside and another acquaintance chimed in on Bork. For heaven's sake, couldn't they at least have chatted about the Redskins a bit or mentioned Madonna or said cutting things on the subject of *The Untouchables*?

Washington is at its worst on Sunday mornings. All over the country people are going to church or playing tennis or lollygagging. But in Washington, they are glued to the tube. I have a vested interest in their watching the Sunday a.m. chat shows, since I'm occasionally on one. Trouble is, watching has become a religion. Once, late in the Carter years, a reporter approached me Monday morning and asked, "You hear what Hufstedler said on Face yesterday?" No, I hadn't heard what Shirley Hufstedler, then Secretary of Education, had said on "Face the Nation." The fellow was miffed. We had nothing to discuss. I figure there's one thing worse than all of Washington watching TV on Sunday morning. It's when the whole country tunes in. It's bad enough the way Washington is. If it spreads, all is lost. ☐

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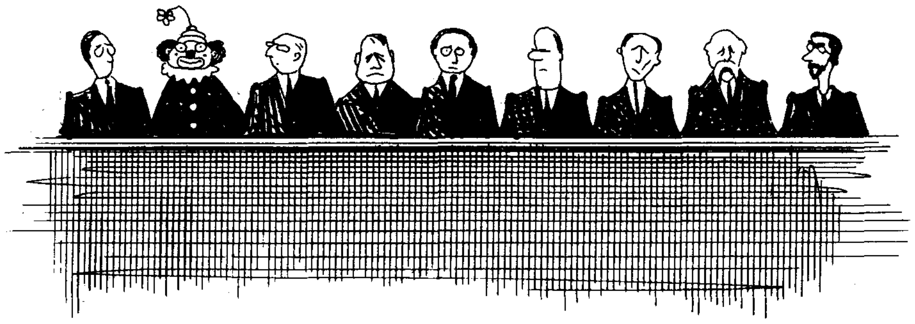

# THE WORST IS OVER

Twenty years is a long time. Twenty years ago, busing was simply a means of transportation. "Affirmative action" was merely a lawyer's term, signifying about as much to the average American as "collateral estoppel." "Gay Rights" was not a term known to anyone. There was already a vigorous debate about abortion twenty years ago, but that debate centered on state legislatures and was largely focused on whether legislatures should expand the few existing *exceptions* to the general and generally accepted criminal prohibitions on abortion. Twenty years ago, those who urged courts to attend to "the environment" simply wanted criminal courts to recognize that crime was "caused" by poverty and drugs and other surrounding influences—and no one, in fact, disputed that this "environment" ought to be eliminated.

If you think about law and courts, you may find it hard to recall why, twenty years ago, America really needed an "Alternative" to mainstream opinion journals. But in 1967 conservative journalists actually didn't have much practical cause to complain about law and courts, beyond protesting the Warren Court's "coddling of criminals." My guess is that twenty years hence, journals like *The American Spectator* will have returned to viewing the Supreme Court as a rather unpromising target. And that may be all for the best.

At the least, the terms of debate in twenty years are likely to be rather different from—and rather less shrill and polarized than—what they are now, notwithstanding what has happened to Judge Robert Bork. By 2007, we are unlikely to be hearing much about "original intent." On the other hand, we are likely to be hearing a good deal more about "property rights" than we do now. And partly in consequence of these trends, what we hear about "civil rights" or "human dignity" twenty years from now is likely to be a good deal more tempered than it is today.

Current debates about "the jurisprudence of original intent" often suggest that it is only in recent decades that courts have begun to depart from the demonstrable, historical intentions of the Constitution's framers. Actually this was charged against the Supreme Court as early as the 1790s—and charged with such vehemence (and plausibility) in one case that an eleventh amendment was quickly added to the Constitution to overrule the Court's misreading of the framers' intent. Similar and similarly vehement charges were made against Chief Justice John Marshall's Court in the early decades of the nineteenth century (and the charges were, again, often quite plausible).

Most of this has been forgotten today because the constitutional issues of that era are no longer in serious dispute. Many legal commentators today still do condemn the questionable "substantive due process" rulings of the early twentieth century, which attempted to limit the reach of minimum wage laws, maximum hours laws, and other sorts of early labor legislation. But it is usually forgotten that these Court decisions were not widely denounced at the time for departing from the true or original "intent" of the Constitution, because the results—though widely condemned by subsequent generations—were not, in themselves, all that controversial before the First World War. Even with respect to recent decisions, today's conservative champions of "original intent" tend to be quite selective (or at least quite evasive) in their condemnations.

Condemnations of Court decisions in the name of historical or original "intent" are not new, then, but they have not often proved conclusive—because, among other things, both the facts and the implications of history have usually been subject to quite varying readings, allowing very broad maneuvering room for sophisticated advocates. And rather than departures from "original intent" provoking controversy, it is more accurate to say that controversial rulings provoke indignant appeals to "original intent." When most people have come to accept a particular judicial construction of the Constitution, appeals to "the true" or "original" meaning do not carry much force. I predict we will see much less agitation over "original intent" in twenty years, because I think there will be fewer Court rulings provoking such indignation.

The reason is not that the justices will be more timid as a matter of personal temperament or more devoted to judicial restraint as a matter of principle. The reason is that the justices will probably have learned some hard lessons in caution from the Court's experiences over the past twenty years. Chief among these lessons is that conventional liberal opinion no longer has a good grip on the direction of "progress" and therefore no longer provides reliable protection for the Court.

Though already obvious, this really is a relatively new discovery. In the mid-1960s, the Warren Court was already assailed by much more bitter criticism than we now remember. We have forgotten this—as we have forgotten the bitterness of the criticism hurled at John Marshall—because the critics of that era turned out to be just what liberal opinion in that era assumed them to be: grotesque hold-overs from a discredited and unusable past. The one ruling of the Court in the 1950s that provoked the most sustained, united, and bitter criticism in Congress was, in fact, *Brown* v. *Board*, which even today's most insistent champions of "original intent" do not dare to challenge. The one ruling of the 1960s that provoked the most sustained, united, and bitter criticism in Congress was the Court's demand for reapportionment of state legislative districts on a one-man-one-vote basis—and here the opponents actually came within a few votes of enacting jurisdiction-stripping legislation that would have effectively reversed the Court's policy. Opponents of the Court's ban on school prayer during the 1960s were even less effective, because they seemed even more readily dismissed as strange relics from the era of William Jennings Bryan. In retrospect, it seems like an act of sycophancy to celebrate the "boldness" of the Warren Court. The justices had every reason to assume that their constitutional innovations would eventually command broad support, because they were supported from the outset by the most confident and influential voices of "elite opinion."

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*Jeremy Rabkin, a contributor since 1977, is assistant professor of government at Cornell University.*

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The aging mediocrities of the Burger Court in the early 1970s were surely even less inclined to be "bold." Attacks on the Warren Court for "coddling criminals" seemed the most respectable remaining charge against the Supreme Court in the late 1960s, and to this charge the Nixon appointees proved on the whole rather responsive, continually pruning back the procedural protections elaborated by their predecessors. But the more senior justices seem to have assumed that the public would at least go along with the elimination of capital punishment. After the Court had condemned the death penalty on procedural grounds in the early 1970s, however, the Court voted to allow its reinstatement on an essentially similar basis in 1976 and the opinions of Justices White and Stewart—who changed their votes to allow this reversal—pointedly emphasized the extraordinary scale of public reaffirmations of the death penalty in the interim.

If the Burger Court had anticipated that its rulings on abortion and school busing and religious establishment would remain bitterly contested into the late 1980s, it is doubtful the justices would have embarked upon them. And in every one of these areas—as in many others—Court decisions of recent years have seen significant retreats or at least significant defections by individual justices from the "bold" stands of the early 1970s.

The point is not that public opinion really rules the Court in place of "original intent." The point is simply that (with some notable exceptions) Supreme Court justices are not appointed for their intellectual capacity and they rarely have the time or the inclination, in any case, to think through their positions with great care. If they do not have to worry about public opinion as much as ordinary politicians, they still follow the pattern of most other people in public life in looking more to their reputations than their ultimate rightness. The Court does not like to be under siege and, whether consciously or unconsciously, justices shrink from exposed or extreme stands. They are most comfortable—and find it least mentally taxing—when they can ride along with "respectable opinion," and in the late 1960s and seventies "respectable opinion"—in the media, in the academy, in Washington—was inclined to think that "progress" meant more equality and more distance from traditional morality (which is so prone to moral distinctions threatening to equality).

In the past decade, we have seen this constellation of ideas shrink from the foundation of "respectable opinion" to the preserve of hysterical advocacy groups. Conservative challenges have not triumphed in many fields but they have decisively undermined the self-confidence of contemporary liberalism. The *New York Times* may still bristle at the arguments of those who oppose abortion or affirmative action, for example, but it cannot dismiss them as crank rants or absurd anachronisms.

I think the opponents of abortion are going to get much of what they seek over the next twenty years, because the moral force of "the right to life" is inherently so powerful and democratic opinion cannot easily remain suspended on such a fundamental moral challenge over a long period of time. Though less urgent and less powerful, many other charges against the extremes of 1970s liberalism—from its embrace of racial quotas to its hostility to religion—will gain political ground over the next twenty years, I think, and receive a more sympathetic hearing from the Supreme Court. But if there is not more consensus in the country over fundamental issues in twenty years, there will certainly be more caution on the Court. The justices don't like to bet their reputations or the Court's prestige on uncertain partisan opinions.

The prediction that we will hear a good deal more about "property rights" is not a qualification or exception to the foregoing but an extrapolation from the same assumptions. For decades after the New Deal, the Court forswore any serious scrutiny of regulatory constraints on the free exercise of property rights or commercial liberties. Many accounts have traced this very deferential posture to the traumatic memory of the Court's bruising confrontation with President Roosevelt in 1937. Other Court-watchers have seen it as a sign of the welfare state biases of the justices. We tend to forget that in this area, too, judicial opinion followed in step with "respectable opinion" in the academy and elsewhere.

For decades after World War II, the major economic texts took a dismissive view of the teaching of classical economics. In the same way, legal commentary took a dismissive view of the "naive individualism" of nineteenth-century common law doctrine (which had been more or less consciously shaped to the teachings of classical economics in many areas). Legal commentators tended to take an equally dismissive view of the constitutional doctrines fashioned in the early twentieth century to guard common law rights against legislative or administrative incursions. But the dominant outlook among economists is now much more respectful of unregulated markets and much legal commentary, in turn, emphasizes the importance of legal protections for market activity. Judicial decisions, too, are beginning to reflect a renewed concern for the legal rights underlying market action.

In the 1970s, the Court invoked the Constitution's Contract Clause—prohibiting state laws "impairing the obligation of contracts"—to strike down state laws in two different cases, for the first time in fifty years. By the late 1970s, the Court was also expressing a much more skeptical view of federal regulatory action, demanding that administrative agencies like the Occupational Safety and Health Administration show more solid evidence that their regulatory requirements made economic sense. Last term, the Court gave a much more aggressive reading to the Takings clause of the Fifth Amendment to limit the authority of local zoning boards.

The case reports are littered with contrary examples, to be sure, but the decisions that are more protective of property rights are not just straws in the wind. And there will be more such cases in the future. This is not because courts follow the returns from the American Economic Association but because the renewed intellectual prestige of markets makes it easier to suspect that regulatory restrictions on the market serve no genuine public purpose—and easier therefore to restrict or invalidate them in the name of constitutional protections for property rights.

The most aggressive judicial interventions on behalf of property rights or market freedom are likely to fall on states and localities, where some of the least defensible restrictions are imposed. And, ironically, the trends in constitutional law over the past fifty years will make such interventions all the easier. By permitting an unchecked expansion of federal regulatory controls, the Court has accustomed people to the idea that states have no very strong claims to autonomy. In more recent decades, judicial activism on behalf of "civil liberties" or "equal protection" has still further eroded the "sovereignty" of the states. And that is not likely to change, even if the Court retreats from some of its more aggressive liberal doctrines over the next few years. The Court may indeed return abortion and many questions about religion to the states but only because it has lost confidence in its own recent "solutions" to these issues. Where the

R. GLENN MARTIN

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Steady readers of this section may perhaps be as fascinated as I am by a new publication that contains nothing but editorial columns and political cartoons.

I chanced on it in an attempt to locate some columns by Jeane Kirkpatrick, former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. When she left the U.N., Kirkpatrick began a weekly political column, and I hadn't yet found out where it was appearing.

Then I saw an ad for something called the *Conservative Chronicle*, published in Iowa, which said it reproduces her columns. I sent off for a subscription and got back a 32-page weekly tabloid containing not just Kirkpatrick but a galaxy of conservative U.S. columnists and cartoonists.

There, unabridged, I found recent syndicated columns by Evans & Novak, Bill Buckley, George Will, Joe Sobran, William Rusher, Dorothy Rabinowitz, Warren Brookes, Walter Williams, R. Emmett Tyrrell, Dartmouth's Jeffrey Hart, Admirals Zumwalt and Bagley, and many others — 41 columns in all — by the elite of American conservative columnists.

There were also 36 political cartoons by the likes of the *Chicago Tribune's* Jeff MacNelly and Dick Locher, Jerry Barnett of the *Indianapolis News*, the *Denver Post's* Mike Keefe — two dozen in all.

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Court retains confidence in its policies, the claims of the states will not count for much.

A more aggressive defense of property rights and economic liberties will certainly raise protests from various constituencies that feel threatened by particular decisions—unions, perhaps consumer and environmental groups, no doubt many local business groups, and particular protected industries. More or less plausible arguments will be launched to the effect that overall economic "efficiency" is not the only concern of public policy, that various other concerns or sensibilities or "values" must be considered. And if only to preserve its political support, the Court is likely to give ground before many of these arguments—or rather, before many of the interest groups pressing these arguments. That may not be a bad thing, however.

One of the special dividends of this caution, I think, will be a reinforcement of the trend toward caution in relation to other rights or other constitutional claims. Even at the turn of this century, when the Court supposedly held to doctrinaire "laissez-faire" views, it was always prepared to accept many exceptions and qualifications. No justice has ever been a doctrinaire libertarian with regard to property. But the Court's preoccupation with "equality" claims in recent decades—often masked as claims about "freedom of expression" or "government neutrality" toward religion—has made some justices and many more commentators think about "rights" in much more extreme and unbending terms. "Rights," we are assured by solemn commentators in today's law reviews, have moral claims that make them exempt from mere considerations of "policy," grounded in mere concern for "social consequences."

In fact, there is much to be said for adhering to settled rules in fairness to the expectations built around those rules; there is much to be said for adhering to settled rules as a guard against impulsive or ill-considered tamperings with the status quo. But the mysticism of locating "rights" in a world removed from the world where everyone else must live—and live with the consequences of judicially enforced "rights"—is not going to flourish in the coming decades. This sort of extreme moralism, which became quite fashionable in the late 1970s, will be harder and harder to sustain as property rights revive and other rights come to be seen in this larger context.

Not all liberal politicians will be hostile to a more aggressive judicial defense of property rights, particularly if states and localities bear the brunt of this trend. Over the past twenty years, many politicians have welcomed "civil libertarian" Court decisions which delivered results that they sought—while relieving them from having to take responsibility for these results. And if they are listening to their fancy advisers at the Harvard Kennedy School and elsewhere, many liberal politicians may indeed welcome the result of decisions that cut back on rent control schemes, zoning manipulations, special protections for construction unions, and so on. But to the extent that liberal opinion tries to be protective of state economic controls for special purposes, it will have a stake in moderating extremism about "rights" and this will not be an argument that can be pursued in isolation.

The constitutional landscape in 2007 probably won't satisfy anyone's utopian fancies. But the Constitution wasn't meant to be a utopian document, after all. We may, in fact, have big national problems and big national disputes in twenty years, on matters hardly thought of today. It doesn't seem at all utopian, however, to expect that twenty years hence we will not be seeking solutions from aging lawyers in black robes. ☐

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### *Bruce Bawer*/Poetry

# ANOTHER VICTIM OF CREATIVE WRITING

In these United States in 1987, the paramount fact about poetry is that there are more poets—or at least would-be poets—than there are poetry readers. Editors routinely receive more poetry manuscript submissions than they sell copies of poetry books or magazines; even the most distinguished of contemporary poets cannot count on having their names recognized outside their own little world of readings, conferences, English departments, and literary parties. There is little reason to believe that things will be any different twenty years from now. (Indeed, such recent events as the decision of *Los Angeles Times Book Review* editors to discontinue poetry reviewing altogether suggest that things are growing steadily worse.)

Why is this so? It all goes back to the early part of the century—to the modernistic precept that poetry should be avant-garde and should *épater le bourgeoisie*, to T. S. Eliot's pronouncement that poetry must be difficult, to Ezra Pound's deliberate composition of poetry for an audience not of ordinary literate people but of poets. During the modern period, in short, poets effectively alienated themselves from the general public; no longer "the unacknowledged legislators of the world," they became Talmudic scholars of a sort, communing with themselves and with one another in a language that was often deliberately private, uninviting, exclusionary. Though, in the years since World War II, the language of a good many American poets has become more comprehensible, this change has arrived too late; Americans have grown used to the notion—young Americans nowadays seem to be *born* with it—that poetry is confusing stuff, and that to read it is a peculiar, idle, self-indulgent, and radical activity.

*Bruce Bawer is* The American Spectator*'s movie reviewer, a regular contributor to the* New Criterion, *and author of* The Middle Generation: The Lives and Poetry of Delmore Schwartz, Randall Jarrell, John Berryman and Robert Lowell *(Archon Books). His poetry has been published in* Poetry, *the* Hudson Review, *and other publications.*

If anything, the isolation of poets from the general public has intensified in recent decades. And yet many literate and self-absorbed young people, who take for granted the post-Beat anti-Modernist teaching that poetry is nothing but feeling poured onto a page, have continued to be interested in writing poetry (even though they may not have the patience to read much of it). This circumstance has provided more and more poets, over the past generation, with a great way of making money—namely, as full-time faculty members in university creative-writing programs, where students take several poetry workshops over a two- or three-year period and are awarded a graduate degree. As a result of the proliferation of these programs during the last decade or so, there are more American poets than ever before—hundreds, thousands more—most of them with some connection or other to the academy.

This state of affairs does not bode well for the future of American poetry. To be sure, many of the finer poets of our day—among them Donald Justice and Donald Peterson—are products of poetry workshops. But there are workshops and there are workshops. A small number of gifted poets meeting regularly with a dedicated, perceptive, selfless, and articulate teacher: certainly there can be some benefit in this sort of thing, for some poets, anyway. But during the past several years, the poetry workshop has become not just one optional element of a young poet's education, but rather the very center of most young poets' educations. In the last decade or so, as a matter of fact, many people in the poetry world have begun to take it for granted that the *only* serious way of preparing for a career as a poet is to enter a university creative-writing program.

Nowadays, therefore, the young college graduate who wants to be a poet usually goes straight into a program. Getting into one is no great trick; the hard part is paying the tuition. Indeed, because the tuition fees are so high and the admission standards so lax, many creative-writing programs—especially the most prestigious (i.e., most expensive) ones—have become, in large part, playgrounds for the modestly talented children of the rich and well-to-do.

This would be perfectly unobjectionable—so what if a bunch of spoiled kids, who have nothing better to do anyway, pay poets to read and comment on their work?—if not for the

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fact that these programs have become enormously important in the making of poetic careers. For in return for their parents' cash, these kids receive exactly what they need to make it as poets in the 1980s. I'm not speaking of an education: many a creative-writing student receives his degree without ever having looked at a poem by Milton, say, or Wordsworth. Nor are most of these students helped to "find their own voices." *Au contraire.* Most of their teachers are likely to be middling poets themselves, more interested in promoting their own careers and proselytizing for their own brand of poetry than in pursuing the painstaking task of helping someone else to discover himself as a writer. Besides, how can a teacher, even a well-meaning one, *begin* to have a clue of what most of his students' "own voices" might sound like, when the majority of them enter the program with only the crudest idea of what a poem is anyway, when he's exposed to them (typically) for a relatively brief period, and when he has ten or twenty or fifty of them to "teach" at any given time?

No, what these lucky students get out of the creative-writing program is *connections.* That, in essence, is what makes the "better" creative-writing programs better: the profs have superior connections. Study with the right person at the right university, and you'll stand a much better chance of getting your poems into the best magazines and journals, of having a book published, of receiving invitations to read, and of winning grants and awards. The teachers often help their students to find jobs, too—as (what else?) creative-writing teachers. Many of them will get hired even though they're not particularly good poets or teachers—for the main qualification to teach poetry-writing at most American universities is not that one's work be first-rate but that one have a creative-writing-program degree.

Given the way that the poetry world works, then, many of the students in today's creative-writing programs stand a frighteningly good chance of becoming the celebrated poets of twenty years from now. And this situation, of course, will make it all the more difficult, over the next twenty years, for truly valuable poets from outside the poetry bureaucracy to be published, read, and recognized.

What can we expect in the way of poetry from these program-bred poets? For one thing, we can expect quantity. These poets have been trained to *crank it out*—whether or not they feel like it, whether or not they're inspired, whether or not they have a fresh and compelling topic. When Eliot or Stevens didn't feel like writing a poem, they didn't—they had jobs. But these program poets *have* to write poems. When they're students, they have to write them for homework; when they become teachers, they have to write them in order to accumulate enough publications to secure tenure and promotions. Like scholars, in other words, poets in the academy are subject to that old academic dictum: publish or perish. And just as this dictum has led to the writing of innumerable volumes of gratuitous scholarly prose, so it has led, in recent years, to the creation of countless expendable poems. As with those volumes of scholarship, the problem with these poems is not that they're *terrible,* really; on the contrary, most of them are quite competently written. The problem, usually, is that they're *dead*—flat, arid, inert. And undistinctive, too: many a creative-writing-program poem is virtually interchangeable with dozens of other poems not only by its author but by any number of similar program poets.

This is not to say that all poets who have come out of programs sound alike. Some, of course, are highly distinctive. But there are armies of successful program poets out there who do sound almost like clones of one anoth-

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er. They write stolid, desultory free-verse poems that often seem to be haphazardly lineated and pointlessly descriptive or anecdotal. Frequently these poems concern personal topics—families, romances—but one sometimes has the impression, nevertheless, that their authors are trying desperately to avoid expressing a recognizable human feeling.

One reason why there are so many poems of this sort in circulation is that creative-writing teachers, aware of their inability to help most of their students to "find their voices," opt instead for what they apparently consider to be the next best thing: they teach their students to write poems that *look professional.* Which means that these teachers—acting on the (probably correct) assumption that the inclination of most young amateurs is to write nauseatingly sentimental effusions about the torments of young love—drill their students in the avoidance of bathos and the accumulation of objective detail (e.g., obscure plant names and odd place names). The result: armies of poets who avoid sensitivity itself for fear of crossing the line into sentimentality.

And yet, for all this, poems that are fresh, affecting, and intelligently crafted continue to be written. There are poets in their middle years—such as C. K. Williams (*Flesh and Blood*, Random House), Robert Phillips (*Personal Accounts*, Ontario Review Press), and Tom Disch—who have distinctive and alluring voices, and who may well be among the art's gray eminences twenty years from now. And there are promising young poets. Every month one of the journals or magazines will contain a poem, perhaps by someone the reader has never heard of, that offers a glimmer of hope for the future of the art.

Among the younger poets who have produced promising work, and from whose ranks some of the major voices of two decades hence may well be drawn, are David Lehman, Peter Balakian, Katha Pollitt, Michael Ryan, David Baker, Barbara Elovic, Daniel Mark Epstein, Phillis Levin, Gjertrud Schnackenberg, and Elizabeth Spires. What's more, such poets as Alfred Corn, Daryl Hine, Robert McDowell, and Frederick Turner (as well as Vikram Seth, an Indian who has written a very exciting, and a very American, book called *The Golden Gate*) have successfully explored different sectors of the vast abandoned territory of narrative verse—raising the pleasant possibility that, in the next few years, more poets will venture into non-lyric forms.

Finally, one of the more encouraging signs of recent years is the rise of a movement known as the "New Formalism." Such younger poets as Dana Gioia (*Daily Horoscope*, Graywolf Press), Charles Martin (*Steal the Bacon*, Johns Hopkins University Press), Timothy Steele (*Sapphics Against Anger*, Random House), William Logan (*Difficulty*, David R Godine), and Molly Peacock (*Raw Heaven*, Random House) have written wonderfully sensitive and thoughtful poems that reveal an impressive—and, in this Age of Creative Writing, a well-nigh astonishing—awareness of tradition and command of form. (Significantly, most of these poets are not products of creative-writing programs.) Their poems remind us of the passion, the intensity, and the intelligence of which poetry is capable.

The best one can hope for that poor battered craft known as American poetry is that, twenty years from now, at least some of these younger writers will have fulfilled their present promise, and that America's small community of poetry readers will have the sense to recognize them as being among the art's finest living practitioners. ☐

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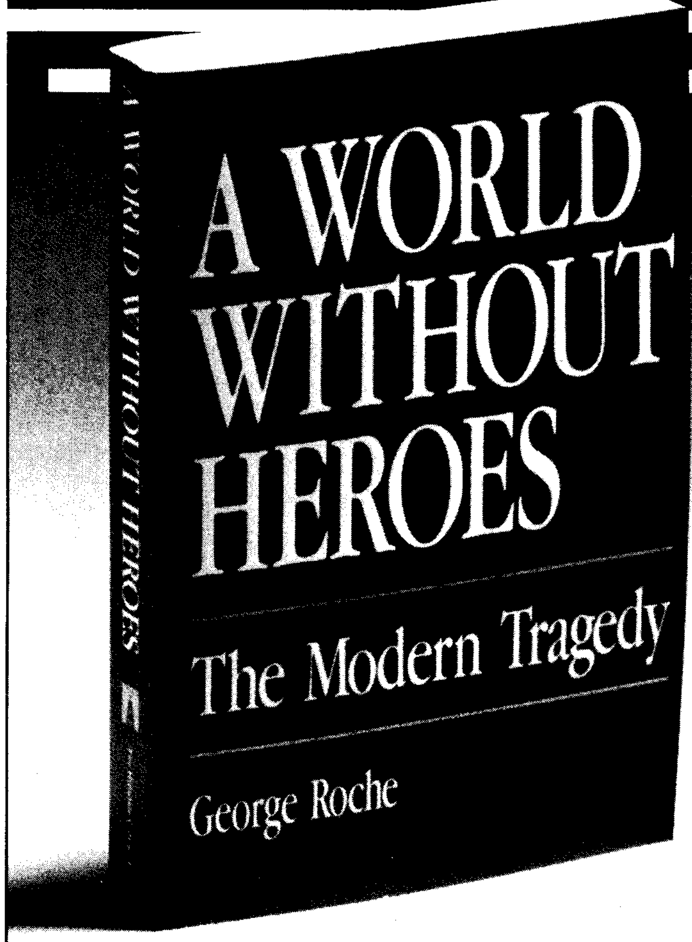

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- Keeping the money flowing from the suckers in Saudi Arabia and Mexico, along with the more friendly funding from the Soviet bloc, and the "insurance" payers from Western Europe, Latin America, and the Gulf.
- Destroying half the cabinet of South Korea.
- Murdering Bashir Gemayel for President Assad of Syria, thus ensuring that Lebanon could not have a strong and stable government.
- Murdering various Americans (from military officers in Germany to Robert Stethem on TWA flight 847).
- Seriously disrupting life in several NATO countries (Italy, France, Greece, and Spain are the most notable).
- Barely failing to assassinate Margaret Thatcher.
- Barely failing to blow up an El Al jumbo jet from London to Tel Aviv.

All of this has been accomplished at very little cost, with traditional equipment, and relatively low-level labor. True, the life of a terrorist is not what it once was; once, there were real terrorist movements that emerged from the fires of social indignation. Today there are virtually none of those, and the terrorist movements that afflict the world nowadays are, with very rare exceptions, state-sponsored. That is why it is harder to infiltrate the terrorist organizations, and why their activities are more efficient than in the bad old days. The terrorists have become professionals; terrorism is now a career choice.

Still, there is unhappiness in the rank-and-file. Some of the terrorists are unhappy because there is too much discipline inside the movements (they liked the old spontaneity better, and who can blame them?), and some of the analysts of terrorism, having predicted a technological escalation for the past decade, continue to foresee a new terrorist era replete with bioterrorism, chemoterrorism, and bignuclearbangterrorism.

While there was some small chance of such breakthroughs so long as there was still a modicum of independence among the terrorist groups, now that the intelligence services of Soviet-bloc and radical Arab states, along with the occasional maverick like Iran, are more solidly in the driver's seat, I expect that we will not see such a melodramatic escalation. In the first place, who needs it? Terrorism is doing just fine as it is, and a sharp increase in the stakes might finally produce a serious reaction from the American government (assuming that we get one of those in the coming years).

The school of thought that holds that terrorism will shortly go higher-tech rests its predictions on the notion that the basic goal of terrorist activity is to grab the attention of the media, and thereby terrorize the populace at large. The prophets of even worse gloom and doom in the terrorist business argue that, since the public adjusts relatively quickly to "conventional terrorism," such acts lose their ability to terrorize, thus the need for escalation.

These self-proclaimed experts have never lived in a country afflicted by conventional terrorism, for if they had, they would not produce this silly argument. Conventional terrorism subverted democratic governments in Uruguay, Argentina, and Turkey, and led Italy, Great Britain, and Germany to adopt harsh legal measures that would have been unthinkable in normal times. These drastic changes took place only after years of bombings and assassinations, which shows, I think, that the publics in those countries did not become indifferent to terror; their rage and frustration grew to the point where they demanded action from their governments. They were even willing to sacrifice their own civil liberties in exchange for security.

Furthermore, the sponsors of terrorism know that there is a point beyond which no government, even the laid-back administrations in the Western world these days, will tolerate the continued existence of terrorist networks in their countries. Look at France, which for centuries proclaimed itself the haven of the politically oppressed, even of "political refugees" who in-

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*Michael Ledeen,* TAS*'s regular "Presswatch" columnist, is a senior fellow in international affairs at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.*

"...may offend Yuppie internationalists."

— Paul Gottfried
Editor, *The World and I*

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dulged in terrorism elsewhere. This nice revolutionary conceit lasted only until bombs ruined the shopping atmosphere on the Champs Elysées, and today, thanks to Jacques Chirac and his extremely tough-minded associates, the terrorists in France have been dealt a severe blow. Even more surprising, the French have been working closely with their Spanish and Italian counterparts to attack the Red Brigades and the Basque killers from ETA. All of this has been bad news for the Syrian, Libyan, Iranian, Algerian, Czechoslovakian, Bulgarian, and other intelligence services who had been helping the Paris-based terrorist groups, and has forced a certain retrenchment. At the moment, the terrorists are thinking deep operational thoughts. George Habash, one of the founding fathers of contemporary terrorism, has told us in a recent interview that while he has come to believe that terrorist violence is counterproductive, his comrades don't agree; he thinks there will be lots more, of a different and more frightening sort, and soon.

I agree that the terrorists have to take stock, and I suspect that we will be seeing different tactics in the near future. But I don't expect something drastically new. This forecast rests upon an assessment of the prime movers.

The sponsors of terrorism want to be able to operate in the West (indeed, aside from the Middle East, that is where terrorism is most common; there is no terrorism to speak of inside the efficient dictatorships of Black Africa and Asia, nor in the totalitarian regimes of the Soviet bloc), in order to support their ideological claims that Western society is oppressive, and to destabilize the feebler democracies. Therefore, they will do their best to keep terrorism on an even keel, vetoing more drastic actions if they can. The terrorist future will therefore greatly resemble the terrorist past: bombs, guns, letter-bombs, hijackings, hostage-taking.

If the strategy and hardware are unlikely to undergo any sort of qualitative change, there will nonetheless be some differences in the next few years. The tactics of the terrorists are bound to change in response to our own defensive measures. Airport security has improved, so the terrorists will be doing more with advanced forms of plastic explosives, some of which are very hard to detect. Ground-level security is now better at government buildings, so the terrorists will be experimenting with new "delivery systems" like drone aircraft. And many nations have managed to get inside their own terrorist organizations, so we can expect a certain crossover of action squads from one country to another. A certain amount of this has been seen in the latest generation of "Euroterrorism," with Germans operating in France, and the like.

The more interesting question is not what terrorism will look like, but what form counter-terrorism will take. Thus far, no one has prepared for terrorism, even though every Western country has had reason to believe that it would eventually come. If you happen to read the Australian press, for example, you will discover that the Australian pilots are terribly upset at the almost total lack of security in their airports or on their aircraft. They believe, rightly in my view, that it is only a matter of time before Australia is forced to fight terrorism. And the time to do it is *before* it strikes, when one can organize intelligence networks, calmly prepare contingency plans, train the necessary special forces and ordinary police, and educate the public. Once it arrives, panic sets in, and the government invariably overreacts. This is the universal pattern. Are we destined to repeat it?

Unfortunately, the answer is most likely "yes." No democratic society these days is permitted by its legislature, its media, and its public to do the prudent preparations that make terrorism easily manageable. Until the terrorists have struck, the main preoccupation of the vast majority of politicians is with expanding the sphere of civil liberties to everyone, including those who will be tomorrow's terrorists. This attitude, laudable in the abstract, has the paradoxical consequence of making things much worse than they need be when and if a serious terrorist assault occurs. But, then, this is our history, isn't it? We did not prepare for war until Pearl Harbor, and then we embarked on one of our famous crash programs; we did not understand the importance of the space race until Sputnik beeped at us from the heavens, and then we produced yet another crash program; and so it goes. These spasms last a few years, and then we return to our happy introversion, attempting to save the Republic from Robert Bork rather than worrying about the tens of thousands of Cubans, Iranians, and Palestinians who have entered this country over the past decade, some of whom must have organized sleeper terrorist cells throughout America. And so, just as we produced the shameful reaction to the "yellow peril" after Pearl Harbor, we shall go through another xenophobic seizure when the terrorist war arrives on our shores, as it surely must. Yet this is our history. And, apparently, our destiny as well. ☐

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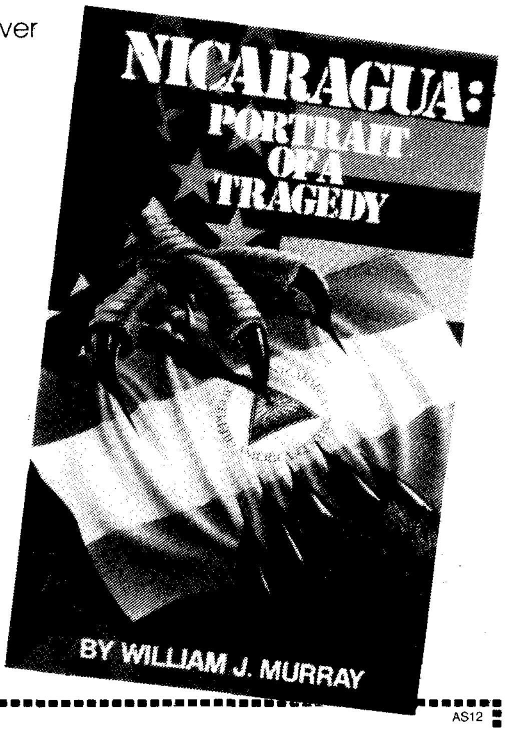

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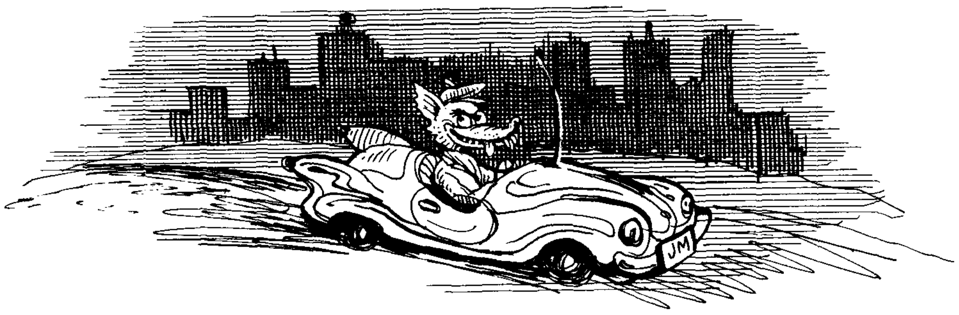

# THE ENDLESS CHASE

*Scene:* Two men in a barroom, one married, the other engaged, discussing current events and displaying the failure of memory brought on by the sickness of Nostalgia.

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*Joe Mysak, a contributor since 1978, is assistant managing editor of the daily* Bond Buyer.

*Ron:* I remember that I'd rather go out with anybody than just stay home. Even if your date was a dud, she might have some interesting friends.
*Joe:* Certainly.
*Ron:* Remember that feeling you'd get on Friday nights, getting in the car, keys in the ignition . . .
*Joe:* Out on The Hunt!
*Ron:* There was always that element of mystery, that potential—
*Joe:* The heightened sensitivity to the promise of life.

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It was this way twenty years ago, and 120 years ago, and will be so in twenty years, and in another 120 years. We will laugh, ignore the pain, and muse about the old days. Lord knows women, especially the kinds who specialize in writing columns of witchery and self-indulgence about the misery of their lot, believe it. But, hey, *it's not that great.*

I refer, of course, to The Hunt, where a man goes out and bleeds in the agony and occasional glory of The Hunt, while *la belle dame sans merci* leads him along the merry way.

No less an authority than George Gilder has proved that the supply of desirable lasses for men in the 20- to 35-year-old range is absurdly, even laughably small. They are all "attached," in the parlance of the day—you probably wouldn't want one who wasn't—and the key, obviously, is and always will be timing, the ability to exploit a Window of Opportunity. Practically every male, however, possesses abominable timing, and the consequence is that barrels of beer, chased with gallons of bourbon, will wash down the gullets of countless sad and bilious huntsmen, hunched over their glasses and recalling with a trace of rue that bright and happy smile, those crystal blue eyes, that saucy personality, the way she wore her cashmere sweaters, turtlenecks, and kilts, and so on.

"Relax. You're not searching for the fairy princess, you know," once counseled the Celtic poet McCorry. But he was wrong. To the unsuccessful huntsman, and here I refer to every male except the twenty-four or so in each generation who have women besieging them, there is no one but the Fairy Princess. Gatsby "knew that Daisy was extraordinary, but he didn't realize just how extraordinary a 'nice' girl could be. She vanished into her rich house, into her rich, full life, leaving Gatsby—nothing."

The character Bernstein in *Citizen Kane* remembers the girl in the white dress on the ferry, a half century later. Jean Shepherd wrote of Daphne Bigelow, who "walked in a kind of soft haze of approaching dawn." Will it be any different in twenty years? Judging from some of the monickers I have observed friends pasting on their daughters, they may all have nearly unpronounceable Gaelic names, but the game will be no different.

Rachel Flick, discussing Helen Gurley Brown in these pages in June 1983, remarked of "the deep-running importance—the importance to character—of having been born to money and sophistication." Despite the reservations about character in fact being what was shown on the beaches at Iwo and on the parapets of the Alamo and on the plain at Balaclava, I am tempted to think she was right. The Fairy Princess is invariably a "muffin," as opposed to a "spank," as one of my spies informs me the term is nowadays, muffins apparently exuding the style and grace that comes with cash. Poverty and power, as William Safire has written, do not mix.

George Wither wrote in the "Lover's Resolution" of such unattainable sweets, "If she be not so to me, what care I how fair she be?" Yet those resolutions are rarely kept. Nor will they be by the time *The American Spectator* turns forty, which bodes well for "The Great American Saloon Series."

There are some satisfying success stories. After all, without hope, it has been said, the heart would break. But the true huntsman relishes the tale of his greatest failures, those anecdotes that, at least at the time, branded him as Mr. Loser as surely as if neon lights spelled the words out on his forehead. He lays them out as happily as he would a scar. Tales of success are terminal; those of failure, of rejection, defeat, and grinding failure, live forever.

Who would forget, for example, Getting Stood Up? At first, listeners brush it off, until a table poll indicates just how rare the occurrence is. The awfulness of it sets in, and the spectators go silent.

Or consider the sterile lunch. You spring for lunch with the new summer intern. She waits until the entree is delivered, and then mentions "my boyfriend," coolly and cruelly gauging your response. You field it cleanly, and do not rub, but the pain is there, and mortifying. The moral of the story is that lack of field intelligence dooms any campaign.

My own personal topper was one disaster where the reluctant Colleen jumped out of my still-moving car, rushed to the front door, and slammed it. Death-defying acts always leave me speechless—but I knew I had a good story. A very close second to this one was the delivery of what Hemingway in *Death in the Afternoon* termed the *esconda*, or sword thrust between the shoulder blades, in this case, a testimony of undying love for another. Put enough of these episodes together, and you, too, will be known as the Prince of Darkness. My own reputation attained such heights that once in Boston I cleared a barroom, literally blowing four young lasses discussing current events with one J. J. Larner out of the place—and all without saying a word. J. J. was struck with the majesty of this feat, and I believe he paid for last call.

The story is always one of timing and, invariably, of impatience. The Hunt, unfortunately, features no hard and fast rules, so that advisers can say: You moved too fast. You didn't move fast enough. You never talk. You never know when to shut up. Et cetera. The only correct advice is to take no advice, and press on in full gallop. Get as many At-Bats as possible. As our friend said in the opening, you never know, she might have some interesting friends. As guides, consider the career of General Grant, or the advice given by Calvin Coolidge: "Press on: Nothing in the world can take the place of perseverance. . . . Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."

Fortunately for the continuation of the species, the hammering received by the male ego leads to a certain, shall we say, selectivity. One should formulate certain . . . *tests*. On the basest level, reserved for the real cheapies, is Miles Per Date, or its twin, Tolls Per Date. A little more aesthetic is the Dr. Lee Murray Size Test, wherein your date, facing you, should not be seen by someone twelve paces behind you—simple, but oh so cunning. The ultimate is the Streetlight Test, where, having succeeded at landing an actual date, although not with a Fairy Princess, you discover nothing egregiously wrong, and finally decide to take her outside and to gaze at her under some unflattering light, to see whether this is, in fact, what you have been seeking. There are some things, after all, that transcend whether or not you can throw a football across her living room, how eminent her Civil War ancestors were, and the excellent Scotch her father serves at home. The final fallback position test, the Last Redoubt, so to speak, is what H. L. Mencken described, simply, as "a girl's laugh." This last is a catch-all, and covers everything from laughs that resemble the braying of a jackass to "She dances as if she is putting out a fire." Being denied the Golden Girl is no reason to lower your standards.

When you reach the point where you can speak with the authority of success, look forward to lengthy critiques of "Men's Conversation"; the look that says I Don't Want to Be Here; and the implications of the phrase "Nothing's Wrong." I will treat these mysteries in the 40th anniversary issue. ☐

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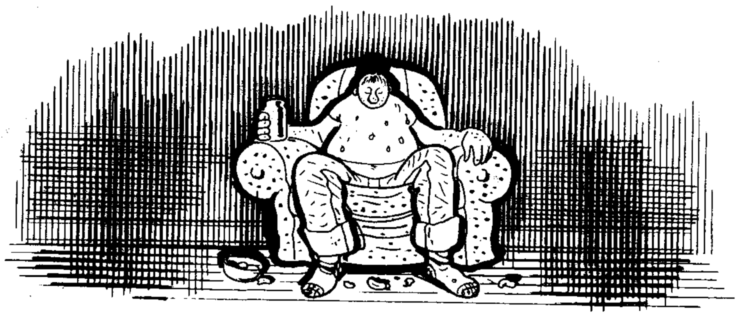
### *Terry Teachout*/Television



# I'D RATHER NOT

Predicting the future when young is a good way to squirrel away a stiff dose of embarrassment for your old age. One safe prediction about television, of course, is that it'll always be pretty dopey. I once described commercial television as the only convincing argument against the free market. (Which suggests a good reason to watch PBS. It makes you appreciate CBS.) The overall quality of television varies with the national intelligence quotient, a digit of dismaying constancy. What *will* change, however, is the larger culture. Since television is little more than an epiphenomenon of American mass culture, it will respond to changes of that kind like water to wind. Here, then, are some speculations about the wave forms of 2007:

*Terry Teachout, a contributor since 1981, is a member of the editorial board of the New York* Daily News. *He writes about television for* National Review.

*No anchormen.* Network news already makes less and less sense to local stations, which pull in more money and get more attention from local newscasts. In any contest between the affiliates and the network news divisions, the affiliates automatically win. The networks, for instance, have been pushing the affiliates for years to let them run hour-long evening newscasts. The affiliates have never agreed. As if to rub salt into this very wound, ABC's New York affiliate recently moved "World News Tonight" back a half-hour and put "Jeopardy" head to head against Dan Rather and Tom Brokaw.

Network news is also making less and less sense to the networks themselves, which are now run by accounting majors and computer nerds who can't see any particular reason for paying anchormen a million bucks a year when the total number of people who watch their shows, as opposed to CNN or local newscasts, is slowly sinking into the sunset. What *does* make sense, at least in the short run, is "Nightline," which devotes its entire half-hour to what network news laughingly calls "in-depth" coverage of a single subject. ABC has already tested a dummy evening news program resembling "Nightline," and it seems likely that one of the networks will switch over for keeps within a year or two. Probably CBS, since the public appears to have gotten tired of Dan Rather. (Hee, hee, hee.)

In any case, the entire network news system as we know it is doomed to extinction by the year 2007. The "talent," as they say in the business, costs too much. It's easier and more profitable to feed affiliates news footage via satellite and let the local glamour boys do all the talking. The future of television news, in other words, is not Dan Rather. It's Ted Baxter.

*More dumb shows.* Nielsen is putting a sophisticated new viewer-measuring system into the field this year. But Nielsen's People Meters will look like greasy kid stuff in 2007. The way they do it on "Max Headroom" is the way the networks will be doing it in twenty years: continuous, real-time ratings figures that tell television executives exactly how their shows are doing from minute to minute. Which, despite the grumbling over People Meters, is exactly what the executives want. Television, after all, exists to give as many people as much of what most of them want as possible. The calculus of hedonism combines with the natural efficiency of markets to produce sharply rising common denominators of stupidity. Commercial television is bound to get worse as the numbers become cleaner, more precise.

Cable television will help speed up this inexorable trend. As usual, the futurologists miscalculated about cable. They thought it would spread faster than it did. But that spread is finally beginning to suck viewers away from the Mighty Three. The major networks will continue to exist, even to thrive, but only by becoming ever more sedulous in their attempts to pull in the maximum number of morons.

*More smart shows.* On the other hand, the bigger the cable audience, the more cost-effective it becomes for medium- and small-sized outfits to put together shows targeted at a tiny but affluent group of viewers. And it's entirely possible that NBC, the network that brought you "Hill Street Blues" and "The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd" and Paul Shaffer and the band, will give up on the mass market and pitch as much of its programming as possible towards yuppies, who are showing an increased propensity to stay home and make like couch potatoes when not out shopping.

*No PBS.* This might just be the most delicious side effect of the cable revolution. Commercial cable services devoted to cultural programming are already

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competing with PBS for new shows from England and elsewhere. Unlike PBS, these operations have to make money, which provides them with an incentive to do a good job. The more first-rate shows they steal from PBS, the harder it will become to justify subsidizing a network which already spends most of its air time broadcasting fund appeals and documentaries about lesbian motherhood.

*No conservatives.* We're letting television slip away from us in exactly the same way we let mainstream print journalism slip away long ago. The trouble is that television won't come and get you. (George Will was a fluke.) You have to go and get it, to learn how to make it sit up and do stupid electronic tricks. Most of our smart guys would rather become investment bankers or policy analysts than work their way up the small-screen ladder. In the absence of any sudden influx of right-thinking young Americans into the world of TV, don't hang by your thumbs waiting for a successor to "Firing Line."

*More old people.* The number of senior citizens in this country is on the rise. By 2007 it will have gone through the roof. These people have time on their hands and disposable income to burn, both of which make them prime targets for sponsors. You can already see this trend at work in shows like "The Golden Girls." To you, "The Equalizer" may be a hip, crypto-right-wing adventure series full of slick surfaces and great music. To your mother, it's a show with a sexy hero who wears bifocals. Look for much, much more of the same in twenty years.

*More rock 'n' roll.* On the other hand, who are all of those old people going to be anyway? Try this one out for size. The first baby boomers will turn 62 one year after *The American Spectator* turns 40. Boomers with gray hair. Boomers who stay home and watch television. Boomers who move in lock step with Teachout's Law: *When you get old, you like to listen to the kind of music that was playing on the radio the first time you went parking.* Assuming that sixteen is the median age for this particular experience, the Lawrence Welk of the year 2007 will be Paul McCartney. With Billy Joel serving as his Myron Floren. And Bruce Springsteen starring in "Father Knows Best: The Saga Continues." These old geezers will be *all over* TV twenty years from now. In your ear, Allan Bloom. ☐

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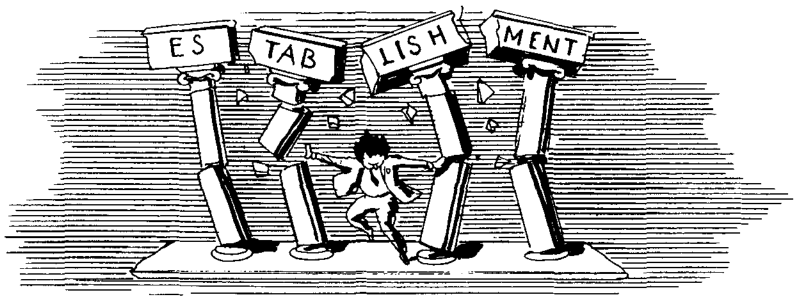
### *Joseph Sobran*/2007



# THE YEAR IN REVIEW

It was another bad year for liberals, as what had once been called "the New Right" consolidated its domination of American politics. The new tone was perhaps best typified on May 2, when President Patrick Buchanan laid a wreath on the tomb of Senator Joseph McCarthy on the fiftieth anniversary of the once-despised Wisconsin senator's death. "We must rededicate ourselves to his ideals," the President said, "and see to it that never again is a patriotic public servant hounded to an early grave."

Other highlights of 2007:

January:

•President Buchanan explained that his decision to drop a hydrogen bomb on the city of Hiroshima was largely symbolic. "Santayana said that those who forget history are doomed to repeat it," he told a crowded press conference. "Those who are tempted to use sharp trading practices against this country cannot choose between Santayana and sayonara." He also listed ten more cities, including Tokyo, Mexico City, and Stockholm, as targets for future blasts.

•Pornographer Hugh Hefner, 81, was electrocuted in California after the Supreme Court rejected a last-minute appeal for a stay of execution. "This had dragged on way too long," said Associate Justice Jerry Falwell. "Justice delayed is justice denied."

•As the last known homosexual, Percy Piper of Los Angeles, died of AIDS, officials of the Food and Drug Administration acknowledged that they had been sitting on a cure for the deadly disease. "There was no need to release it," said an FDA spokesman. "The problem was taking care of itself."

February:

•Former Senator Edward Kennedy, 75, drowned, an apparent suicide, after driving off a Massachusetts bridge. Family friends said he had been despondent ever since his rejection by the voters.

•President Buchanan signed a major new tax reform bill establishing a sliding scale of taxation. Under the new plan, those earning less than $10,000 a year will pay 50 percent of their gross income to the federal government, while those earning more than $1,000,000 will pay no taxes at all.

•In Albuquerque, a routine police raid uncovered a huge cache of illegal condoms, apparently smuggled in from Mexico.

March:

•Air Force officials announced the removal of a final hitch preventing deployment of the long-awaited "Star Wars" missile defense system. "We hope to have a first-strike capability by Christmas," said General Howard Tripp.

•Harvard president Jim Bakker announced that the venerable university would change its name to Boston Bible College. "We've got to get back to the original ideas of the founders," he said.

April:

•For the fourth straight year, FBI statistics showed a sharp decline in the number of crimes against wealthy people.

•Seven more states ratified a proposed constitutional amendment barring the teaching of the theory of evolution in publicly funded schools and universities.

•The Supreme Court upheld the use of torture against criminal suspects, provided that all other methods of securing confessions had been ex-

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*Joseph Sobran is a senior editor of* National Review *and a nationally syndicated columnist.*

hausted. "Torture must never be an end in itself," wrote Justice Gilead Simms for the 8-to-1 majority. "In the great majority of cases wiretaps, raids, informants, and threats should suffice to extract information leading to conviction. The excesses of the *Miranda* era cannot be invoked to justify excesses in the opposite direction."

May:

•Citing health reasons, Justice Robert Bork, 80, announced his retirement from the Supreme Court. According to Washington insiders, the real reason for Justice Bork's retirement was his discouragement at being the last remaining apostle of judicial restraint in an era of conservative activism.

•The *Washington Post* resumed publication after a six-month interruption. Managing editor Richard Cohen issued an apology for having published unauthorized Pentagon leaks and pledged never to do so again.

•President Buchanan signed a bill abolishing the minimum wage. "The main beneficiaries of this bill will be young blacks," he explained, "but that's unavoidable. The positive side is that white employers will profit too."

June:

•INS officials demanded the extradition of fugitive abortionist Dr. Henry Coombs from Sweden, to stand trial in this country for crimes against humanity.

•The Supreme Court struck down as unconstitutional the drunk driving laws of all 50 states. Speaking for the five-man majority, Justice Grover Rees held that drunk driving was protected by a "penumbra" of the Twenty-First Amendment.

•In a voice vote, the House of Representatives voted down a proposal to restore women's suffrage.

July:

•An explosion ripped through the New York headquarters of the American Civil Liberties Union, killing the entire national board of directors, who had convened for their annual meeting. A city police official said the blast was "probably due to faulty wiring or something," adding that he saw no need for an investigation.

•In his first White House visit, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini congratulated the United States on its moral regeneration. "We used to think of the U.S. as 'the Great Satan,'" the aged ayatollah smiled. "How times do change."

August:

•A special prosecutor announced the indictment of six Democratic congressmen on charges of treason, citing "a clear pattern of pro-Communist discrimination" in their voting records.

•Chicago police issued an apology after raiding a Ku Klux Klan meeting, explaining that they had been misled by an anonymous tip that the gathering was socialistic.

September:

•The FBI formally established a new department of Vice Control, popularly known as "bedroom cops." "The law is very clear as to sodomy," said FBI director John Lofton. "It means *all* forms of sodomy, and it doesn't make exceptions for husbands and wives. Being married doesn't put you above the law."

•President Buchanan returned from a state visit to South Africa, during which he conferred with South African leaders about a mutual defense pact. "I saw a vibrant, booming country," he said in a nationally televised address. "Where are they now, those prophets of gloom and doom who said apartheid would never work?"

•Secretary of State Howard Phillips responded harshly to Soviet charges that the United States is hatching plans for a new escalation of the arms race, in violation of formal and informal arms control agreements. "Since when do they think treaties are holy?" he snorted.

•The United States agreed to pay reparations to the government of Nicaragua for its role in toppling the regime of the late Anastasio Somoza. "We

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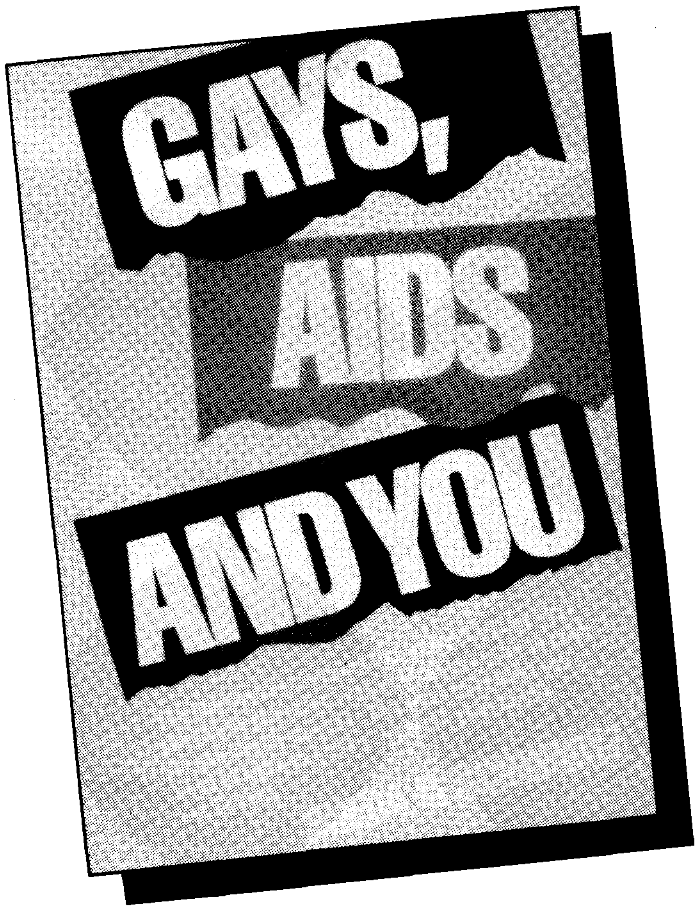

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hope this will remove one of the darkest stains in our national record," said President Buchanan. "We helped doom the Nicaraguan people to more than a decade of Communist tyranny." Nicaraguan president Pedro Somoza termed the U.S. action "gracious and generous."

October:

- The Supreme Court struck down all federal "social programs" passed since 1933 as invalid under the Tenth Amendment.
- President Buchanan signed into law a mandatory church attendance act. Brushing aside civil libertarian criticism of the law as "communistic," the President called the Constitution "a living document whose genius lies in its adaptability to current needs."

November:

- Pope John Paul III excommunicated the entire Jesuit order. Vatican observers predicted a similar move against the American Catholic bishops.
- The Nuclear Regulatory Commission announced plans to convert Boston Harbor into a nuclear waste dump. "This opens the way to a new era of cheap energy," exulted an agency spokesman. "It also sends a clear message to those states still inclined to elect liberal politicians."

December:

- President Buchanan refused to rule out a re-election bid. "Our approval ratings are sky-high," he said, "so as commander-in-chief I don't see any immediate need for a coup."
- The Presidential Commission of Poverty and Sloth recommended that states follow the federal government's lead in abolishing all welfare programs. "These systems are based on the outmoded premise that poverty is a function of environment," the commission's report said. "We know now that heredity and race are the key factors."
- The long-suppressed full text of the Warren Commission Report on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy was finally released to the public, along with a purported correspondence between former Chief Justice Earl Warren and Nikita Khrushchev, apparently confirming charges that Warren, gunman Lee Harvey Oswald, and several others were acting under direct orders from the Soviet strongman.
- The year ended on a dramatic note as President Buchanan hinted that the United States was about to take a major new initiative against the Soviet Union. "We have a little New Year's surprise for the Soviets," he said, "and it isn't Guy Lombardo."

• • •

Milton Grimsby bolted up in bed. His pajamas were soaked with sweat. He looked around the bedroom. It was still 1987. His wife was already dressed and ready to go to her law office.

"Oh Megan," he said, "I've had the most awful dream—"

"I'm not surprised," she said, "the way you made such a pig of yourself at the Bradens' party last night."

"No, *listen*. It was 2007, the year 2007, and the right-wingers had taken over *everything*, and—"

"Where have you been? That happened in 1980."

"No, Megan, no! That was just the *beginning*! In my dream, Pat Buchanan was President, Jerry Falwell was on the Supreme Court, and you'll never guess who was FBI director."

"Not R. Emmett Tyrrell?"

"No, *worse*. It was—"

"Milton," Megan sighed, "I've got to get to work, and you're going to be late yourself." She snatched her purse from the dresser and marched out.

Milton swung stiffly off the bed and pulled on his robe. The world was starting to seem normal again, but he had to make sure. He hurried into the living room and opened the front door and looked down.

Yes. The *Washington Post* was on the porch. ☐

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# BABY BOOM INFLUENCES

Some of our brightest young writers pay tribute to their mentors and describe the milestones in their intellectual coming of age.

### *DAVID ASMAN*

In the summer of 1969—about a month before I convinced my parents that a 15-year-old could survive a weekend trip from Washington, D.C. to a festival in Woodstock, New York—I called a friend of mine about an upcoming university lecture by William F. Buckley, Jr. I had seen the great Buckley/Vidal TV encounter the year before and kind of respected Buckley—as an enemy, of course.

"Sure, I'll go," said my friend, who didn't realize till we got there that the Buckley he had been thinking of was actually a folk singer whose first name was Tim, not William. Disgusted by politics in general, my friend said "the hell with this" and left. I decided to hang around.

There was something electric about the situation that excited me. The audience really hated Buckley. But he didn't try to pander to them by making the sort of "well-you-have-a-point" statements that a lot of "establishment" characters were making at the time. Nor was he using smug Agnewisms to shoo away the radical boogies. He took all their arguments head-on and devastated them—with a sense of humor, too. "This guy ain't half-bad," I thought to myself.

Finally, after all the barbs failed to crack Buckley's reasoning, one of the rads in the audience screamed out: "You're stupid!" With that the audience began to whistle, snort, hiss, and generally make any further comment by anyone on stage impossible. Buckley took off.

Now, there were many things one could have said about Buckley. But "stupid"? Naw. If this was the best rejoinder my comrades could come up with before turning into a nasty, spoiled mob, I figured it was time for me to rethink my alliances.

I went to Woodstock that summer and had a lousy time sharing the rain and mud with thousands of freaked-out acid-heads, most of whom were so stoned that they could barely stay awake for—let alone remember—the music. Now that was stupid.

*David Asman is editor of the* Wall Street Journal*'s "Americas" and "Manager's Journal" columns.*

### *BRUCE BAWER*

I wish I could say that I knew the late novelist (*Edgell's Island*) and screenwriter Robert Presnell very well, but I didn't. A friend of my parents, he lived three thousand miles from me, and I saw him only when I was in California—perhaps no more than a dozen times in all, over the years.

But I spent enough time with him for him not only to make an indelible impression upon me but to make a real difference to my life. The first time we met I was nineteen, and wanted more than anything else to be a writer. I had in fact been writing for years. But I was only beginning to think of myself as a writer—as an adult, that is, who writes for a living rather than driving a truck or going to an office—and I was not yet comfortable in the role. At that time I didn't know anybody who made a living as a writer; Robert was the first professional writer I ever knew. And so he became for me something of—not exactly a model or a mentor, but an incomparable example of what a writer, at his best, could hope to be.

He was wonderfully learned and well-read but never pedantic; he was a champion of the true, the good, and the beautiful, but never played the aesthete. He was an intellectual if I ever saw one but would never have referred to himself as such in a million years. He hit ideas back and forth as swiftly and deftly, and with as good a spirit of sportsmanship, as he did tennis balls. He wanted to hear your opinion as much as he wanted to present and defend his own. And he always did so with wit, unaffected charm, and a natural graciousness. He was sensitive—a man of delicate feelings who could read other people with amazing accuracy. He believed in the power of ideas and in the importance of art. Unlike many people in Hollywood he knew what art meant. And he was a humanist, a man who never ceased to be fascinated, frustrated, and amused by the ways of the human animal. Nor did he ever cease to love writing—the act of writing, the art of writing. Just to be in his presence was to be awed by his brilliance and infected with his enthusiasm for his art, and for his life. People think that writers are misanthropes who like to closet themselves away, but whenever you were with Robert you knew how untrue that was. Robert loved writing because he loved people. Because he loved life. That's why he was such a good writer, such a good man—and such a good example to one young admirer.

*Bruce Bawer is* TAS*'s movie reviewer.*

### *MARTHA BAYLES*

Perched on a wide windowsill with a view of the school parking lot, Michael had refused several entreaties and commands to climb down and take his seat. He was small for a 13-year-old, so I seized him by his collar and hurled him against the nearest desk, which tipped over, spilling greasy food wrappers and drippy soda cans across the already tacky floor.

On that spring day in the mid-seventies, I thought nothing of the incident; such furious stabs at discipline were an hourly occurrence in the luckless public school where I was teaching. But later, I thought everything of it; the moment came to represent a turning point, a revelation that instead of lifting these deprived kids to a higher level, I was sinking to a lower. My sixties-generation friends still called my motives "idealistic," but only because I had quit telling them about my job. They didn't like to hear that the poor were so depressing.

It may seem a stretch from an inner-city classroom to Flannery O'Connor. But at the time her book of essays, *Mystery and Manners*, was having a healthily astringent effect on various intellectual inflammations I had acquired at Harvard, and I was especially struck by her account of why most of her characters were poor: "I am very much afraid that to the fiction writer the fact that we shall always have the poor with us is a source of satisfaction, for it means, essentially, that he will always be able to find someone like himself. His concern with poverty is with a poverty fundamental to man. I believe that the basic experience of everyone is the experience of human limitation."

Now, "human limitation" is the sort of concept every bright collegian can readily grasp and apply to other people. I had spent four years trying to become as tough and patient as the teachers I admired, but all I had become was bored and misanthropic. Attracted philosophically to the poor, I was now in a rut made of my own limited ability to help them with their problems. And I didn't know how to climb out, until O'Connor's pithy apologia gave me a toehold's worth of understanding.

*Martha Bayles is television critic for the* Wall Street Journal.

### RICHARD BROOKHISER

The invitation appeared under my door the first week of freshman year at Yale, on blue paper. In the top right corner was a list of names with improbable titles; in the top left, a double-headed eagle. "The Chairman and the Executive Committee of the Party of the Right," it read, requested the Honor of my Presence at a debate on the topic, Resolved: Democracy is the best form of government. The Chancellor of Cards and Games, the note concluded, would serve port and sherry, "as is traditional."

Formally, the Party of the Right—POR for short—was a subdivision of the Yale Political Union, a dullish college debating and speaking society. But the POR was anything but dull.

It spent a lot of time flaming—one of its Vietnam-era songs, to the tune of the "Ode to Joy," began, "Bomb the towns and kill the peo-ple . . ." It spent more than a lot of time politicking—the longest meeting I have ever sat through was one memorable executive committee session which lasted sixteen hours.

But most of our time was spent in talk, endless talk, some of it over the pompous port and sherry, most over lunch, dinner, New Haven grinders and pizza, or circling the starlit quads. We talked God, culture, history, sex, philosophy, music. Occasionally we reached conclusions.

The list of POR members now out in the movement is eerily long. But politics was the least of it. "We discussed all manner of things," wrote Bertrand Russell of the Cambridge Apostles, "no doubt with a certain immaturity, but with a detachment and interest scarcely possible in later life." If I never cast a vote or read a newspaper again, I will still live my life in the echo, fading but persistent, of that four-year conversation.

*Richard Brookhiser is managing editor of* National Review.

### DAVID BROOKS

I used to wonder if I lost that debate with Milton Friedman because the University of Hawaii women's volleyball team lounging around the pool of the Palo Alto Holiday Inn distracted me as I was studying up on the virtues of socialism. Had I crushed Friedman, in front of a television audience no less, I certainly would have been Big Pinko On Campus back at Chicago, and solicitations from *Dissent* and the *Washington Post* Outlook section would have had to reserve space in my mailbox.

But there was this stunning volleyballer (a spiker, I think), sunning herself on the diving board, and I could swear she winked at me as I ogled her over Robert Lekachman's *Greed is Not Enough: Reaganomics*. It's true what they say about mixing lust and industrial policy: messes up your career plans.

I was out in Palo Alto for a taping of "Tyranny of the Status Quo," a sequel to "Free to Choose," which featured Mr. Friedman gently explaining to seven young people that their economic ideas were moronic—a kind of monetarist "Father Knows Best." The show could have been a disaster, because most of the young people selected—Richard Vigilante, Lee Lieberman, Steve Calabrese, Harry Crocker—didn't have moronic economic ideas. Thank God I was there to pick up the slack. A democratic socialist then, I'd spent the preceding weeks boning up on my Harrington, my Heilbroner, my Thurow, at the ready with the latest salvos of collectivist ideology.

Well, it wasn't pretty. Friedman bore the full brunt of my logical assaults, and often it took him as many as three or four words to thoroughly refute them. (To be fair to myself, my disquisition on the evils of economic growth did leave him temporarily speechless.) I tried to follow Rose Friedman's off-camera advice that you should never concede anything to Milton, no matter how rudimentary. If he asserts the sky is blue, deny it against all reason. Once he gets you to admit the sky is blue, he'll force you to the conclusion that federal aid to education is counterproductive.

One evening after taping we all went out to dinner and Mr. Friedman pushed aside his meal until he had finished explaining another of the virtues of the marketplace. I guess his passion as a teacher, his eloquence, and the truth of his arguments finally had some impact, because I finished the show a little more open-minded. Over the next two years, I did a lot of reading, I worked as a police reporter on the

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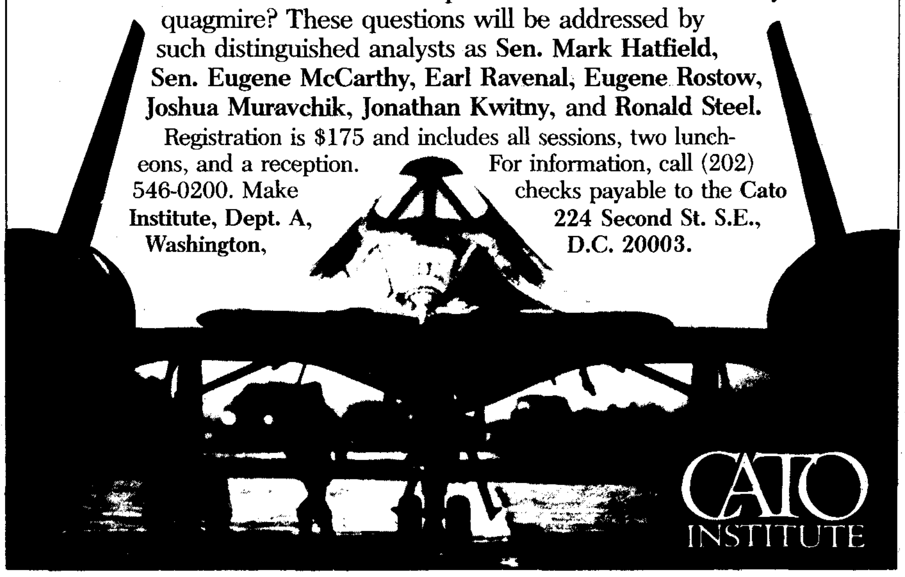

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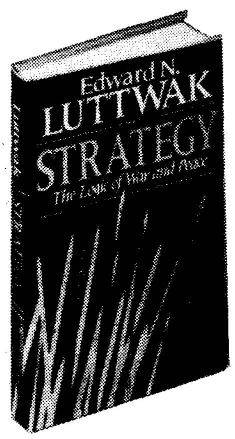
South Side of Chicago, and gradually I discovered that he was right about a lot of things. Scarcely a day goes by when I don't silently thank Mr. Friedman—and the spiker.

*David Brooks is book editor of the* Wall Street Journal.



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### ALLAN C. CARLSON

One afternoon in 1978, I left the Library of Congress literally sick to my stomach. I had recently turned for the first time to a serious study of American family trends and came to understand the true horrors of modern American liberal dogma. The new literature on family sociology resembled a great sewer composed of bald lies, clever deceits, manufactured data, and ideologically charged interpretations. Under the labels of "new family forms" and "changing mores," politicos disguised as social scientists were rapidly advancing an agenda designed to destroy the decent, natural institutions of American life.

The experience, though, had antecedents. Born a moderate Republican (I was for Scranton in 1964!), the first hint I had of conservative tendencies was the unsettling pleasure found in reading anthologies of early nineteenth-century Catholic political thought, especially essays by Joseph de Maistre. From study of and conversations with the unlikely source of Gunnar Myrdal (the subject of my dissertation), I had learned to appreciate the volatile mix of economic, cultural, and ideological developments that lay behind modern social change, and to understand the need to peel back the surface manifestations of political acts, in order to examine the dynamics beneath.

Conversion of a sort followed, when a friend placed in my hands a copy of *The Constitution of Liberty* by Friedrich Hayek, Myrdal's heretofore mysterious co-recipient of the Nobel economics prize. I also found solace and renewed faith in the true power of social analysis through the work of Robert Nisbet. Soon, I began to feel better.

*Allan C. Carlson is president of the Rockford Institute.*

### MONA CHAREN

I spent my formative years in the Gucci Archipelago known as northern New Jersey. Livingston: home of crowded shopping malls and closed minds (a sort of Allan Bloomsbury).

By day, along with my schoolmates, I was instructed in the prevailing dogma. But by night, I would crouch beside my little AM radio and soak in the words of Barry Farber. He was a one man Radio Free America.

Thus began my life as a dissident. After Farber it was but a short step to malicious hooliganism. The high school librarians knew that I was the only student who had ever checked out the works of William F. Buckley. So they came to me when a book by Pearl Buck was missing. In Bloomsbury, New Jersey, in 1973, it seemed obvious that only an eccentric in the process of checking out the entire card catalogue alphabetically would read Buckley.

Other crimes followed. But even during my four-year re-education sentence at Camp Barnard, they couldn't break my spirit. What Barry Farber had begun, the vast machinery of the liberal establishment could not undo.

*Mona Charen, former associate director for public liaison at the White House, is a nationally syndicated columnist.*

### TERRY EASTLAND

I first sold books for the Southwestern Company during the summer of 1967. Fresh out of high school, I had traveled from my native Dallas to Nashville, the company's home, for a week of "sales school," before moving south to my designated "territory," which was Houston County, Georgia, just south of Macon. My roommate and I rented a room in Perry.

The summer was wild. Southwestern taught us to work six days a week for at least 75 hours, and to work like the mailman, through rain and everything else. We sold family Bibles, home medical encyclopedias, and the like. Each of us went door to door. I failed to sell a single book on my fifth day out, a Friday. It was my first "0" day. It was also my only one ever. I wish I'd known that at the time. I did have an excuse—the Perry police irrationally kicked me out of town late in the afternoon. Five weeks later a sheriff in another town, a man of broad shoulders and truly red neck, told me I'd need a sales license. The next day the town clerk told me none was needed. The sheriff caught up with me as I came out of the clerk's office, and advised me not to sell in his town, which by that time I'd just about finished selling anyway. For most of the summer I had no car, hitching rides around the country and riding a bike I "rented" from a customer for $10. Once a drunk gave me a ride and offered to take me "where you need to be taken." Somehow I managed to get him to stop as he wheeled down a dirt road, and I lit out through a cornfield as he pulled to his lips a half-drunk quart bottle of beer. Late in the summer I bought a beige 1961 Plymouth with 93,000 miles for $300. It had push-button drive and a rusting right fin.

I got through that summer, making about $3,000, enough for freshman year. I knocked on another 20,000 doors over the next seven summers, in North Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Illinois, and Iowa. I paid for college and more. I saw the kitchen tables of America. I learned about liberty, and I learned not to hitch-hike.

*Terry Eastland is director of public affairs for the Justice Department.*

### FERNANDA EBERSTADT

As a student, I was equal parts ignorant, pigheaded, and know-better, a trait which first emerged in kindergarten when I told my teacher that "hut" began with an "o" and refused to back down. Later on, I became something of a class dummy in the very clever and very conscientious New York girls school I attended.

Miss C. was the school terror. Wasp-waisted and pretty as a china doll, she taught math in a voice so piercing and so caustic you could hear it—and quake—five stories below. (She was also, coincidentally, the first Reaganite—this was back in 1976—and probably the first Republican any of us had ever met.) Her specialty was tormenting those students who hide in back rows and daydream. My specialty was failing math courses. Miss C. set her sights on me, and hiked me up to her advanced algebra course and the following year to advanced calculus, where she drilled into me with indefatigable sarcasm and insult the crystalline beauty, the imaginative complexity and breadth of higher math. She taught me, by sheer force of will and intelligence, how to think and how to make mental connections—between math and music, math and ballet, math and painting—and proved to me I could do something I was stubbornly determined I could never do. This, then, is the first task in a certain kind of mind's development: to stop loving one's ignorance, and listen.

*Fernanda Eberstadt is the author of a novel,* Low Tide *(Knopf), and a frequent contributor to* Commentary.

### TIM W. FERGUSON

Before there was a Rand for me, before Hayek and the Austrians, way before I'd heard of neoconservatives, I'd gotten the gospel according to Hoiles. R. C. Hoiles was, until he died in his 90s in 1970, the publisher of what is now the *Orange County Register.*

I grew up with the *Register* and later wrote and edited there for about five years. These days the paper is attractive and modulated, but when I was delivering it on a bicycle it was feisty and often cranky. Even back then I probably wasn't reading much from R. C. directly in the editorials—he'd given up his signed column and mostly turned over the publisher's space to his colleagues. But interspersed among the right-wing warhorses of the opinions section was a distinct school of thought, one anchored in natural rights. Property was a central tenet. Much of it came from the Foundation for Economic Education. "Baldy" Harper, founder of the Institute for Humane Studies, appeared until his death. A maverick legal thinker named Bernard Siegan was getting a lot of ink. When a full-page ad fell through (and only then—R. C. was as interested in making profits as in making converts), the *Register* would do what no newspaper should and run a long, gray tract on liberty. Hardly anyone read them, I'm sure, but I did.

R. C. was a libertarian—a Bible-based one at that. He liked the Golden Rule but not many of man's laws. I know him only from lore, but it's said he didn't care whom he roused. In fact, he cared to rouse them. The favored example of his principled stubbornness (and courage) is his opposition to the round-up of Japanese-Americans in 1942. If he didn't like FDR and that gang, he wasn't any easier on the local "schoolmen," as he called them. How, he asked, could they teach values if they broke the stealing Commandment in order to do it? (R. C. was a "taxation is theft" purist.) Before he died, some admirers made a short film about him called "Man Against the Tide." Indeed, he was. Today, editorial director Ken Grubbs keeps the old man's photo on the wall and his name and thoughts alive in the gussied up *Register.*

From R. C.'s *Register* I got an education in the nearly lost literature of the Old Right—Frank Chodorov, Rose Wilder Lane, Felix Morley. In retrospect, their stuff can seem shallow—too much sweeping philosophy and not enough dealing with the tough choices of public policy. But they were sentinels, not social scientists. It discourages me that so many of the conservative red-hots in Washington know so little of this tradition.

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*Tim W. Ferguson is editorial features editor of the* Wall Street Journal.

### *K. E. GRUBBS, JR.*

There I was, three, maybe four, years Goldwaterized, editor of my community college newspaper, and R. C. Hoiles wanted to break me in as a cub reporter. The *Register* was Orange County, California's largest newspaper, and there were lots of burgeoning cities with lots of school boards, planning commissions, city councils, and cop shops whose proceedings I struggled to represent in the old inverted pyramid.

I had spent a summer or two working in Walter Knott's "Freedom Center," a right-wing bookstore which displayed not only some kooky publications from Belmont, Massachusetts, but a multitude of volumes spanning the conservative movement in the late 1960s. There were Hayek, Mises, Chodorov, Meyer, Read; and Kirk, Chamberlin, Chamberlain, Burnham, Buckley. I digested them all.

But R. C., then about 90, and a crusty advocate of what he called "close reasoning," wanted me to refine my thinking beyond a mere appreciation for capitalism and federalism. He wanted me to witness firsthand the petty tyrannies of the local "planners." I saw plenty of them. Conclusion: Conservatives may be eloquent enough about the need for decentralized government, which is to be infinitely preferred over the command economies everywhere else, but somebody has to look out for the bastards at City Hall, who can be as badge-heavy as any party functionary in Kiev.

I emerged a libertarian, albeit one who, like R. C., took his principles from such "moral guides as the Ten Commandments, the Golden Rule, and the Declaration of Independence." An individualist, I was allergic to gatherings of three or more libertarians, who could quote their Rand but were otherwise stunted in their apprehension of the West's great heritage. I think I stopped going to libertarian conferences when I saw one too many peach-fuzzy faces atop one too many tie-dyed T-shirts stretched over one too many premature paunches; and one too many copies of *Intellectual Digest* stuffed prominently under one too many wimpy arms.

I was also allergic to the state college system, from which—under the influence not only of R. C. Hoiles, but Russell Kirk on the right and Paul Goodman on the left—I dropped out. I've had my own radio program, done two stints in Washington journalism, filed dispatches from various spots around the globe, published a small group of newspapers (part of Hoiles's chain) in upstate New York; I even lectured once at Harvard. I don't mind taking this opportunity, just once, to smirk at my old classmates who went ahead and copped their "communications" degrees from Cal State Fullerton.

Now I have my own editorial page, preaching daily to the sybarites of the "Orange Riviera," who remind me right back that the world spins along nicely without much of an assist from Washington. Over the years I've met, worked with, and been influenced by Bill Buckley, Frank Meyer, Malcolm Muggeridge, Michael Novak, Arnaud de Borchgrave, Chuck Colson. But the greatest influence remains: R. C.

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*K. E. Grubbs, Jr. is editorial and commentary director of the* Orange County Register.

### *GORDON JACKSON*

Until well into my twenties I had never doubted the received wisdom of academia—that conservatism is nothing more than personality defect. Then one day in a Tucson, Arizona bookstore I picked up what looked like a pretty racy title, *Sexual Suicide* by George Gilder. Reading it was a scales-falling-off-the-eyes experience. Deep in the recesses of my soul I had always felt that the feminists were bitter harridans intent on emasculating a society, but I'd repressed such thoughts as manifestations of my dark, sociopathic side. Gilder demonstrated that both my instincts and the traditional order could be defended with cogency and eloquence, and I honestly hadn't realized that was possible.

Descending from this epiphany ever deeper into the pit of reaction—indulging in *National Review* subscriptions and other perversions—I eventually made my way to law school in Indiana where my regimen included administering weekly thrashings on the handball court to the editor of this esteemed journal. Ever the good Christian, Bob Tyrrell turned first one cheek then the other to these indignities and bestowed upon me many of the insights he had gained from years of looking directly into the fearsome visage of the lunatic left. His example was one of constant good humor and *joie de vivre* while going about the laborious business of instructing the Zeitgeist as to its deficiencies.

Sadly, during its moment of ascendancy the conservative movement seemed less inclined than before to honor its thinkers and prose stylists—the Gilders, Tyrrells, Sobrans, and Buchanans—who were most responsible for gaining conservatism whatever stature it now enjoys. The policy drudges and politicos have their place, but they can't knock the scales right off the eyes of confused young people like these gentlemen can and did.

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*Gordon Jackson is managing editor of* Policy Review.

### *GEORGE SIM JOHNSTON*

The sudden evaporation of the New Left in the early seventies still mystifies—unless, that is, you happen to have been there. When I arrived as a freshman on an Ivy League campus where SDS, PL, and other radical groups were active, I was vaguely sympathetic to their ideas. America has socialism for the rich and capitalism for the poor; Ho and Mao and blah, blah, blah. You recall the litany. But I also had a residual belief in pluralism and democracy, and I was not prepared for the totalitarianism of these groups. They secreted an atmosphere of rancor and intolerance over the entire campus: you could not escape it in the darkest depths of the library stacks. The moment of crystallization came when the radicals organized themselves to shout down the South Vietnamese ambassador when he tried to speak at a forum sponsored by the university. When confronted with the fact that they had denied a person freedom of speech,

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they retorted that they were simply exercising their own "freedom of expression." On such sophistries are concentration camps built.

But disenchantment with the New Left did not immediately send me to the other side of the political spectrum. That was the work of George Nash, no stranger to *TAS* readers. My senior year he put me on a crash intellectual diet which included James Burnham, Irving Kristol, and the greatly underestimated Willmoore Kendall. I think that the political trajectory of many members of my generation has followed the arc of Winston Churchill's dictum: if you are not liberal when young, you have no heart; if you are not conservative when older, you have no mind.

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*George Sim Johnston is a writer living in New York.*

## MICAH MORRISON

For young Americans raised in those halcyon days of liberalism, an especially important part of intellectual growth probably should be the cultivation of the ability to see what is bogus and mean and what is true and good in the world. To paraphrase Hemingway, a built-in bullshit detector should be part of our intellectual baggage.

Nothing provides a constant testing of accepted notions so much as travel. One day a few years ago, I was working with a photographer on the West Bank. Though I lived in Jerusalem at the time, each trip into the territories was a journey into a zone of ambiguity, a place part Israeli, part Arab; a place where the ideas and practices of Israeli democracy stumbled against the hard realities of a military occupation; part familiar and hospitable, part menacing, a silent suggestion of danger seemed always hidden in the bare, beautiful hills.

We were at Bir Zeit University, a center of Palestinian nationalism. Most of the students and teachers we spoke to supported Yasser Arafat's al-Fatah (the dominant group in the PLO), accepted the existence of the Jewish state, and wanted a Palestinian state next to Israel. In private and off the record, some of the teachers expressed grave doubts about Arafat's ability to cut a deal with Israel.

We chanced into a shabby cafe and met a young supporter of George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Trying to explain his loyalty to Habash's bloody record, the student told us that he was a Palestinian "from the camps, not from the villages." A small magazine photo of Habash was tacked on the wall. Habash is a radical Marxist terror warrior who over the years has turned his instruments of arbitrary violence against a variety of ruling classes, including the Israelis, the Americans, and assorted Arabs. At one point in our conversation, the student abruptly tore Habash's picture from the wall, demonstrating how quickly he could make it vanish if the soldiers approached.

This young man was taking no prisoners. Not only would "the Jews" have to go, but the liberation of all of Palestine was only a step in the war against American imperialism and Arab monarchism. Reactionary Palestinians, of course, would not be allowed to stand in the way of the revolution. Nor, naturally, would American journalists, those occasionally useful idiots and lackeys of capitalism. I glanced toward the bright, sunlit doorway. I politely smiled and took notes. The cafe was small and hot and the door seemed very far away.

I could enumerate the things I learned from that brief encounter, but this is a comment on travel, not arrival; on the shaping of an understanding of the world, not the conclusions we each must draw from such an understanding.

*Micah Morrison is deputy director of the Committee for the Free World and editor of its monthly publication,* Contentions.

## JOE MYSAK

It is axiomatic that adult males are maturing later and later. At age 14, Grandfather Mysak decided to come to America and found the dynasty. My father, at age 18, won the war in the Pacific. When I was 19, I began to think. Penetrating the thick soup of childhood locked into my even thicker skull was the signal accomplishment of Prof. Peter Onuf of Columbia.

He was some sort of Midwestern Scandinavian socialist, or an errant product of the Maryland Free State, I forget which, but he took a shine to me, lone confessed journalist in a class of pre-law and pre-med students. For a time, it seems, he was a journalist himself in, of all places, Orange County, California.

Prof. Onuf taught Contemporary Civilization, one of Columbia's core of required classes, and filled with all the heavy lumber in the attic of the West: Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Rousseau, Hobbes, Adam Smith. Thankless task; and he could have drummed it all into his charges, I suppose, with all the standard impedimenta to learning—voluminous notes, memorization, frequent quizzes, weekly papers. Instead, he chose a sort of crypto-Socratic freewheeling discussion format. I think he picked the chalk up once, and with warning.

Our morning hours were thus spent talking about the books we had (in most instances) just read, and mainly about individual liberty and the state. This is true. We started out timidly at first, and then, when the lines were drawn (Gustavson and Reed being the only others in the class on the right), high in oath and in full gallop. We started out, in other words, like "Agronsky & Company," and ended up "The McLaughlin Group," with master Onuf at times intoning, "All right, let's get out," positing a notion, and asking for a show of hands.

At the time, I was amazed at how many of my peers were ready to heave the Constitution overboard, burn the Declaration of Independence, abolish the Magna Carta, and choose life in some tyrannical Utopia. I am no longer surprised. At the time, of course, I had some ammunition; for years, my brother had been supplying me with *National Review* and a paper called *The Alternative*, with admonitions to "read this." Now, for the first time, I was forced to put into words—most of the grade was class participation—how I felt. "Hey, wait a minute, Thomas Jefferson ain't beanbag" just goes so far. The fog lifted, and I have been unable to shut up since.

Unhappily for my biographers, this did not lead to taking the best notes. Scattered here and there among the desultory definitions of the Sovereign and the State of Nature, I find lists of songs with "angel" in them, an address for a bar that was torn down years ago, and the beginning of a short story, "The Perfect Weekend," whose first line was ". . . you little bitch!" Rousseau was evidently not to my taste. But this story does have a happy ending. My brain slipped into gear, albeit as slowly as a loaded B-52 taking off for Moscow, and Professor Onuf did not let his inclinations get in the way of awarding me a solid B-plus. He said he had run out of A-minuses.

Around the same time, I discovered all four of my totemic figures: H. L. Mencken, Tom Wolfe, Jean Shepherd, and Heywood Hale Broun. None of them has failed me, and none of them is taught in college.

*Joe Mysak is assistant managing editor of the daily* Bond Buyer.

## DONNA RIFKIND

The biggest influence on my intellectual development was a book first published in 1924 and now long out of print called *A Child's History of the World*, by an American schoolteacher named V. M. Hillyer. I think I was about seven or eight when I first read it but it has stayed with me as some books do. A few of its facts are imprecise and, in addressing its original audience of wealthy schoolboys, it has a patrician and sometimes nearly bigoted point of view. But this book early on put the world in order for me, and I'm grateful to it for that. More important, it presented history as grand things that happened to live people, not as random, dead details. I have hoped for the same sense of vitality in every book, factual or fictional, that I've sat down to read since.

I should mention that I consider my intellectual development at this point to be at a rudimentary level, and anyone in a position of influence has a chance for a fair hearing if he or she tries to reach me now.

*Donna Rifkind is assistant managing editor of the* New Criterion.

### CLAUDIA ROSETT

There have been a few searing moments. The day in 1971 when I first read a poem by William Butler Yeats, and realized you could love the English language without understanding it. The day in late 1979 when Jimmy Carter went public with the information that "The Russians lied to me," and I realized you could run a country without understanding anything. And then there was the day, long ago, when I got my first respectable job, got my first respectable paycheck, and realized that if I went on earning a decent living I was going to be systematically robbed for the rest of my life by the IRS. There was a profound lesson in this: Clearly the object was to have the most fun for the least salary possible. So I became a journalist. That means there's time left free in the evenings to read Yeats instead of Laisser's tax guide. Probably someone ought to be thanked for all this, but I doubt it's the government.

*Claudia Rosett is editorial page editor of the* Asian Wall Street Journal.

### VICTORIA SACKETT

Great intellectual inspiration has come to me most often from great intellectuals uttering what they would regard as uninspiring homilies. Many of these have proved to be words of such grand simplicity and good sense that they should be cross-stitched on samplers in 24-karat gold.

Irving Kristol's advice to a friend of mine who wanted to know how to prepare to become a writer: "A writer writes. You don't write, you'll never be a writer. So write something."

Elliott Abrams on intellectual self-esteem: "You're not stupid, Victoria, you're just uneducated. Go to Reed College like you plan to and you won't ever feel stupid again."

Elliott Abrams again, this time on how to differentiate one regime from another: "Any country that has 'democratic' in its name probably isn't."

My uncle, Stanley Sackett, debunking the culture of narcissism: "No one had a happy childhood," and "Most of the world's greatest work has been done by people who don't feel very well."

William A. Schambra, on citizenship and partisanship, when I asked him before the 1980 election to spend five minutes trying to convince me to vote Republican: "It's not worth my time. You live in the District of Columbia."

Ben Stein on the enemies of achievement: "Perfectionism is a greater crippler of young adults than multiple sclerosis."

These bits of wisdom I prize above rubies.

*Victoria Sackett is deputy managing editor of* Public Opinion.

### JOSEPH SHATTAN

I first met Sidney Hook in the fall of 1978. I was fresh out of graduate school and had been awarded a year's fellowship at the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace. I knew that Sidney was out at Hoover, but I'd never met him. From his writings I imagined him to be a severe and imposing figure, the kind of man who doesn't suffer fools gladly. To my infinite surprise and gratitude, he became both friend and mentor.

As everyone knows, Sidney Hook is a man of towering erudition and intellect. But what drew me to him was not his scholarly attainments, but his character. Sidney is someone who just can't stand seeing people suffer. Politically, this made him a relentless enemy of totalitarianism; theologically, it's made him an atheist. After all, if God really exists how can He let all this suffering go on?

Sidney's on-going quarrel with God pops out at the oddest moments. I remember a conversation we once had about a colleague at the Hoover Institution, a lady well into middle age, who had never married. Sidney was indignant. He explained how Women's Lib has actually hurt women by providing men with a pretext for cruelty. Then he exclaimed, "All these lonely women. . . . It's another proof of God's non-existence!"

Sidney Hook was not the only remarkable personality I got to know at Hoover. There were several others—Ella Wolfe, Lewis Gann, Milorad Drachkovitch, John Bunzel, Robert Hessen—and I treasure their friendship. Their collective influence on my intellectual development was decisive. For the first time in my life I felt part of a scholarly community, a long and distinguished intellectual tradition. That sense of continuity and purpose has sustained me throughout my Washington sojourn.

*Joseph Shattan has served as a special assistant to Jeane Kirkpatrick, William Bennett, and Elliott Abrams. He is currently a member of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff.*

### DAVE SHIFLETT

Politics tends to take the mind away from the big questions: the mystery of love, the nature of God, the reason for ideas. Public officials, having given up the larger quest in order to concentrate on bond referendums and gerrymandering, should be excused when they traipse after graft or a Senate page.

This was my view prior to the first Iran controversy, when Jimmy Carter, whom I liked, let the mullahs bugger Uncle Sam for 444 days without a breather. This situation forced a reappraisal, which eventually led me to Washington.

The closer I looked into political life, the worse it seemed. The people who called themselves liberals all sounded

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like someone's rich aunt halfway through a bottle of sherry, bragging about her compassion and brains. They also tended to cower before the Communists, who are, as far as the intellect goes, the biggest threats around. If you think things were settled before they ever began—that is, if you're a religious believer—they persecute you. If you seek your truth in the future, you're also asking for trouble. Come to their nineteenth-century conclusions or it's the slammer. Who needs that?

My inquiries have led me to believe that politics is often the first refuge of the second string, a benchwarmer's paradise. Sycophancy, fear, and duplicity are rewarded with limousine service, television appearances, and pretty good dough. This opinion seems to be shared by many so-called conservatives, who don't consider themselves infantrymen in a movement but more like snipers, shooting rats at the dump. Many of us have had the time of our lives, and doubt anyone will miss us when we leave.

*Dave Shiflett is a writer living in Virginia.*

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## WHIT STILLMAN

My political turning came in 1971 when I took a leave of absence from my sophomore year at Harvard to go to Mexico "to write." At home the ideological spectrum had extended from my father, a liberal Kennedyite politician, to my elder brother, a founder of Harvard's SDS who shared the political ideals of Mrs. Mao Tse-Tung. I was somewhere in-between.

At Harvard I had joined the *Crimson*, which was then in Viet Cong hands. The VC ambiance pervaded much of the university; the slogan "Viet Cong women carry guns" had been painted everywhere by some opinion-maker; you were either with the Viet Cong women, or you were against them. While in the past one could hold left-liberal views while enjoying a "bourgeois" college existence, such contradictions were no longer acceptable. Everything was politicized, including colors. Wearing light or bright colors apparently showed a lack of solidarity with Viet Cong women—and that could make people very angry. One lowly staff member had the audacity to wear a yellow scarf into the *Crimson*; the managing editor picked the miserable bourgeois up by the lapels and gave him a progressive shaking. You were either part of the problem, or part of the solution, and the solution was Viet Cong women who carried guns and presumably knew how to use them.

Still I remained anchored to the left by the idea of Poverty, of people suffering, and of the unequal distribution of wealth (that x% of the people owned xx% of the wealth, while xx% owned only x%—and it was getting worse). Something, *anything* had to be done.

Latin America has been the left's favorite terrain, since it is easy to exaggerate the crimes and inequities of some authoritarian regime to the point that world opinion decides something, *anything* must be done. What struck me in Mexico, where rich and poor often live next to each other, was not Poverty but poor people, something specific not abstract—and the inappropriateness to them of the emotion-laden socio-political constructs of Cambridge. The world seen with unguilty eyes became a much more interesting place.

In Mexico on the folkloric buses going to town center Saturday afternoon the poor local girls dressed up in the same despised bourgeois colors—pink, yellow, green, and white—that preppie American girls wore, and for which one could get assaulted in Cambridge.

*Whit Stillman is* The American Spectator*'s New York editor.* ☐

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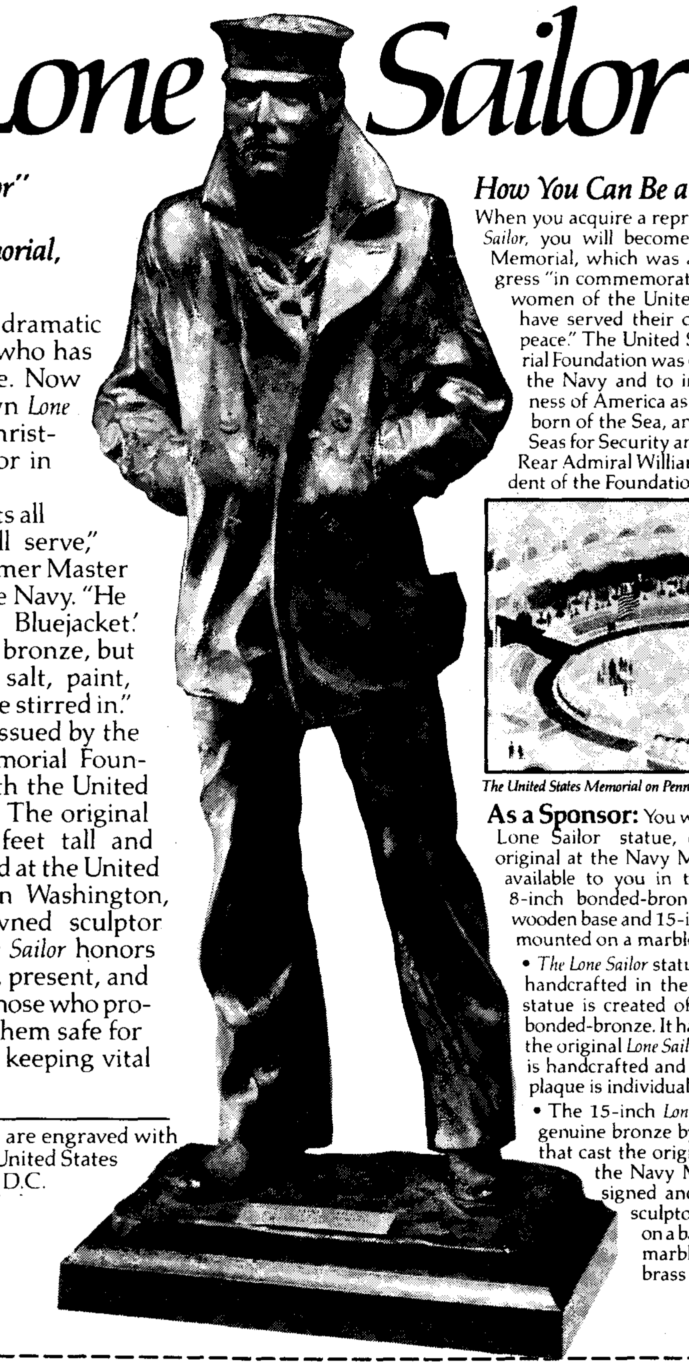

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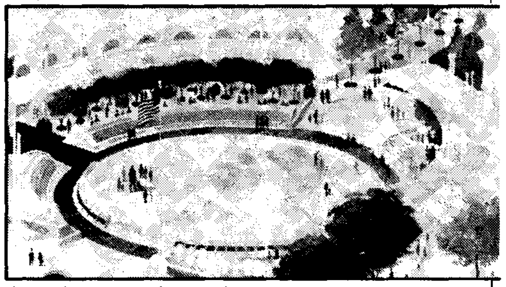

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# SPECIAL BOOK REVIEW: MENCKEN'S LETTERS

DREISER-MENCKEN LETTERS: THE CORRESPONDENCE
OF THEODORE DREISER AND H. L. MENCKEN,
1907-1945
Edited by Thomas P. Riggio/University of Pennsylvania Press/$69.95 (2 vol.)

MENCKEN AND SARA: A LIFE IN LETTERS
Edited by Marion Elizabeth Rodgers/McGraw-Hill/$22.95

"ICH KUSS DIE HAND": THE LETTERS
OF H. L. MENCKEN TO GRETCHEN HOOD
Edited by Peter W. Dowell/University of Alabama Press/$19.95

William H. Nolte

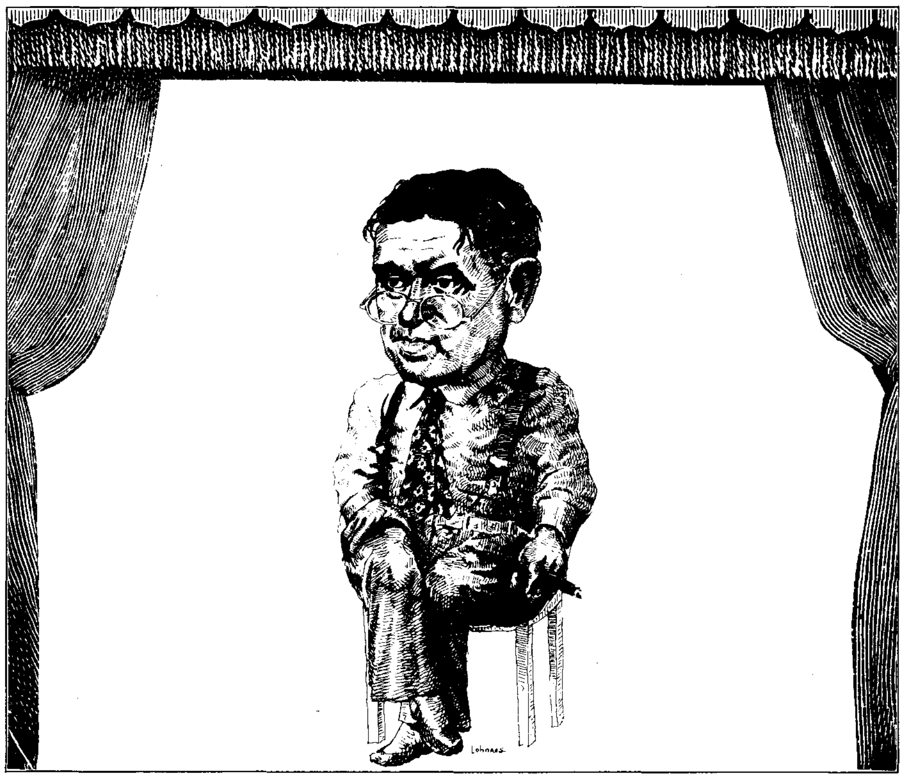
Concerning his correspondence, H. L. Mencken had a simple rule: letters were to be answered within 24 hours of receiving them. Whether he always followed that rule I cannot say, but I remain skeptical. After all, he was frequently away from Baltimore for days, and even weeks, at a time, which meant that he must have often had hundreds of letters awaiting his return. Still, as one who has spent several years snuffling about through Menckeniana, I am willing to believe that on one occasion he really did (as he told Alfred Knopf, his publisher) write 125 epistles between matins and taps. Even those people, and there must have been hundreds if not thousands of them, who wrote to express their outrage over something he had written received cards from him, bearing the printed words "You're probably right." Whether that policy derived from politesse or from some impish desire to have the last word is anyone's guess.

During those years when he was co-editor of *The Smart Set*, from 1914 to 1923, Mencken was in touch with virtually every writer of any importance in the country. As Tom Wolfe noted with some hyperbole but not enough to matter much, during that period American literature commuted from 1524 Hollins Street, Baltimore—certainly the most famous private address in the nation. Nor did his correspondence decrease in volume during the years when he edited *The American Mercury*, the first issue of which appeared in January 1924. Down to around 1930, by which time the magazine had fallen from its position as our leading journal of ideas, a decline brought on in large part by the Depression, he frequently wrote as many as thirty letters a day. Just how many letters Mencken wrote during the fifty years when putting words on paper was almost as normal an activity as breathing, no one will ever know. Estimates vary from a mere 100,000 to around a quarter of a million; his bibliographer, the late Betty Adler, offers convincing evidence that the latter figure is the more reliable. Between 1932 and 1950, rather a slack period when his secretary, Mrs. Rosalind Lohrfinck, kept a stenographic record of his correspondence, his daily average dropped to an even dozen—for a total of about 80,000. In her *Man of Letters: A Census of the Correspondence of H. L. Mencken*, published by the Enoch Pratt Free Library in 1969, Miss Adler identified more than 5,000 correspondents along with the eighty or so libraries that house the letters that have survived.

Probably the best known of all the many stories told about the epistolary Mencken and the effect his letters had on the recipients is the one recounted by Sherwood Anderson in his memoirs. "We got the letters," he wrote "and the letters made us proud. 'Well, I had a letter from Henry Mencken today.' You said it casually, but in your heart, you felt that it was like being knighted by a king."

A more expansive, and humorous, tale concerning Mencken's mind-boggling industry may be found in S. N. Behrman's introduction to Carl Dolmetsch's history and anthology of *The Smart Set*. Behrman admits that he was so in awe of Mencken that when Harold Ross, the editor of the *New Yorker*, invited him one day in the early thirties to have dinner with him and Mencken at the restaurant 21, he accepted but with some trepidation: "I was young enough to be a hero worshipper." Like so many other of the best writers of his generation, Behrman got his start in the literary world when Mencken accepted one of his stories for publication—though not for *The Smart Set*, to which he later contributed numerous short stories and one-act plays. As with all such recollections, one must suspect the authenticity of the direct quotations, but one accepts the substance nonetheless:

> I studied Mencken. The most exhilarating writer in America, the wielder of a blunderbuss with the deftness of a fencer, was, in person, quiet, reserved, attentive, courteous. He had written of himself that he was "naturally monkish," but there was certainly nothing monkish in his appearance. He might have been Chancellor of a German University or the Mayor of Hamburg. Also, he had the unassuming air of a great man. Something impelled me to tell him that when I was a Senior at Harvard I had gotten my first acceptance of a short story from him, not for *The Smart Set* but for a publication called *La Vie Parisienne*. "Oh," said Mencken, "we published that *sub rosa*. It made up for *Smart Set* deficits. It came in handy. We even published good things in it; they slipped in when we weren't looking."



During the course of the evening Mencken told Ross a wild story, made up on the instant, by way of soothing Ross's anger over the bibulous habits of his stable of writers—and of deftly pulling the editor's leg in the process. At the conclusion of the tale—about a visiting Englishman who insisted that his American host take him to see a hanging, too long and involved to relate here—Behrman's eyes met Mencken's: "Without winking, he winked at me. I saw that inside he was bubbling with delight that Ross had swallowed his story whole." After more talk about *The Smart Set*, the chief aim of which, as Mencken said, was "to discover new writing talent and to aerate Puritanic tradition," and much more talk about music, Mencken's first love, Ross expressed to Mencken his amazement that the Sage found time to answer personally every letter he received. To which Mencken simply replied: "I have the habit of answering letters," as if that, Behrman adds, made it effortless and not in the least time-consuming. It would be impossible to paraphrase the finale without doing it injury:

> At ten o'clock Mencken got up to go as he said he had work to do. We put him into a cab and Ross and I walked down 52nd.
>
> Ross was full of admiration for Mencken. "He's so God-damn *industrious*," he growled. "Imagine! He writes *The American Language* and still finds the time to answer every God-damn letter!"
>
> I consoled Ross by reminding him that Mencken was German and thorough by inheritance.

Long before Mencken's departure to bliss eternal (he was always convinced that he was ticketed the other way, but then he often erred in his predictions), his letters were showcased for their vibrancy and charm, humor and common sense—in brief, for the *manner* in which he conveyed his likes and dislikes. For example, in his compilation of *The World's Great Letters* (1940), M. Lincoln Schuster included the letter (written in 1933) Mencken sent Will

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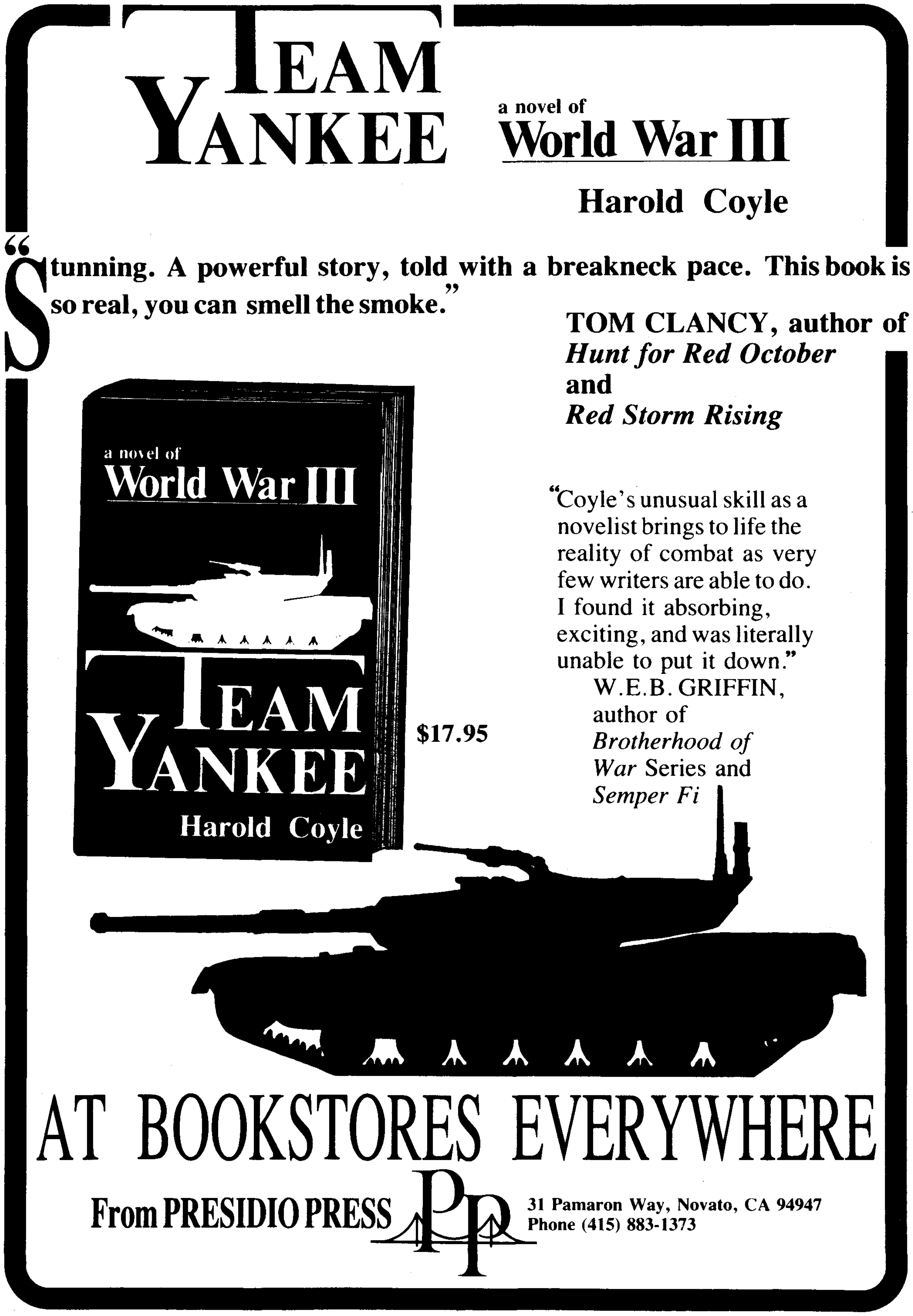
*William H. Nolte is C. Wallace Martin Professor of English at the University of South Carolina.*

Durant, who for a symposium he was conducting had asked Mencken among others to explain what meaning life had for him. Schuster regretted that he lacked the space for "another characteristic Mencken letter"—one in which he paid homage to his musical gods. Still, Schuster went on to quote from that letter, written to Isaac Goldberg and published in Goldberg's biography of Mencken in 1925: "Of Schubert I hesitate to speak. The fellow was scarcely human. His merest belch was as lovely as the song of the sirens. He sweated beauty as naturally as a Christian sweats hate." The hyperbole, the brevity of syntax, the great delight in the vulgate, the delirious note of irreverence—all are there and seem natural and spontaneous even in their unexpectedness. Incidentally, the entire letter appears again in Louis Cheslock's collection *H. L. Mencken on Music*, and has been reprinted in part numerous times.

The first collection of Mencken's letters appeared as long ago as 1961, just five years after his death—a rather remarkable fact in that the letters of most of our important writers are published, if at all, only after their literary remains have been mostly exhausted, usually twenty or so years following their demise. And then one volume usually suffices. In editing that first large collection, entitled *Letters of H. L. Mencken*, Guy Forgue had to deal with an abundance of riches. Hence, he restricted his selection to what he considered "the best of Mencken's *literary* letters, along with a number of others that best express his *personality* and give the most vivid and lifelike picture of the man and his literary activities." By thus limiting his choices, he was able to stay within the confines of one volume. Sixteen years later, Carl Bode edited another fat selection (the two books contain more than 1100 pages) designed to reveal the breadth of Mencken's encyclopedic interests and again the personality—that perfectly integrated personality which, as Hamilton Owens once noted, he seemed to have possessed almost from the beginning. If Forgue had the first choice in the selection, Bode was the first to mine the enormous cache of letters in the New York Public Library that was restricted until 1971. Most importantly, the NYPL houses copies of the letters that Mencken dictated to Mrs. Lohrfinck—that is, most of the letters that he wrote after 1932. Whereas two-thirds of the letters in the Forgue collection were written before that date, the same amount in Bode's *The New Mencken Letters* was written after. I think it is unlikely that any more general collections will be forthcoming. Henceforth, we may expect to see separate editions of letters addressed to single correspondents.

The first such collection, *Letters from Baltimore* (1982), contains the 200 letters Mencken wrote to British author P. E. Cleator between 1936 and 1948, the year he suffered his permanently disabling stroke. Though these letters are certainly worth having in print, and Cleator has done an excellent job of editing them, of clarifying all the references Mencken makes in his answers to Cleator's queries and in his responses to the war-time horrors (both of Cleator's parents were killed in an air raid), they will be of little interest to the general reader. Moreover, these are letters of the elderly Mencken, lacking the spark that ignites the missives of his early and middle years. Even more noteworthy, they are letters written to a man whom Mencken never met, World War II having come between them, so to speak. In fact, the war had been over a year before Mencken dropped the "mister" from his salutation. Though they shared a number of views and interests, one cannot help *feeling* the physical distance separating them, a distance which prevented that shared experience upon which true congeniality is based. It is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only natural that the best letters of Mencken's last years were those addressed to old friends.

And one of the oldest and most important of these friends—and one of the most disagreeable—was Theodore Dreiser. With the recent publication of the *Dreiser-Mencken Letters*, issued in two volumes admirably edited by Thomas P. Riggio, we at last have the most complete record of their correspondence we will likely ever have. What eventually became something like a collaboration between the two most influential, in their separate and very different ways, dissidents in our literature begins in 1907 with Dreiser, then editor of the *Delineator*, inquiring if Mencken might be interested in providing him with a popular edition of Schopenhauer's works—a request that Mencken apparently declined. (Dreiser did not begin keeping Mencken's letters until more than a year later, and then he didn't save them all.) Already well known in newspaper circles as both editor and journalist, Mencken had by then published *George Bernard Shaw: His Plays* (1905) and was at work on the more substantial *The Philosophy of Nietzsche* (1908). He was also ghost-writing articles on the feeding and care of children for Dr. Leonard Hirshberg, a Baltimore physician. Concerning those articles Mencken called on Dreiser a few months later in New York. It is hard to say, as F. O. Matthiessen wrote, which of the two men was farther from his proper work: Mencken as the author of an article on "When Baby Has Diphtheria," or Dreiser as the one who solicited the article.

In his account of that first meeting (given to Isaac Goldberg in 1925), Dreiser described his caller as a "taut, ruddy, blue-eyed, snub-nosed youth"—how typically Dreiserian the description!—whose appearance was that of "a small town roisterer or a college sophomore of the crudest and yet most disturbing charm and impishness, who, for some reason, had strayed into the field of letters." Looking like "a spoiled and petted and possibly over-financed brewer's or wholesale grocer's son who was out for a lark," Mencken promptly ensconced himself in a large and impressive chair placed there to deflate the ego of the overly confident, and from that unintended vantage point beamed on Dreiser "with the confidence of a smirking fox about to devour a chicken." Dreiser wrote that they at once dismissed the original purpose of the conference and proceeded to expatiate on "the more general phases and ridiculosities of life, with the result that an understanding based on a mutual liking was established, and from then on I counted him among those whom I most prized—temperamentally as well as intellectually. And to this day, despite various disagreements, that mood has never varied."

Disagreements they certainly had throughout their long friendship, and none was sharper than the one occasioned by Mencken's review of *An American Tragedy* in the March 1926 number of *The American Mercury*. (Riggio includes all of Mencken's reviews and articles on Dreiser in an appendix—some 40,000 words of criticism that reveals, as no one else's has, the great strengths and the no less great weaknesses of the novelist's opera.) By the time *An American Tragedy* appeared, the battle over realism and the freedom of letters, which Mencken had waged throughout his first dozen years on *The Smart Set*, had been successfully concluded—so successfully in fact that the genteel critics (mostly located in the universities) had not only been routed from the field but many of them had changed sides and were now supporting Dreiser and others whom they formerly had scorned. Also, the post-War critics, following in Mencken's wake, could be depended on to give Dreiser's behemoth of a novel a sympathetic reading. Hence, when Menck-

# A Time to Choose: CATHOLICISM or DISSENT?

Recently the NEW OXFORD REVIEW held a symposium in its pages on "Americanist" dissent, or "American Exceptionalism" — the prevalent notion that the American Church should make itself an *exception* to Vatican teaching and assimilate itself to American practices, especially in the areas of Church governance and sexual morality. Here are excerpts from some of the comments we printed:

**Peter Kreeft**: On questions of essential dogma and moral principles, there can be no such thing as "American exceptionalism," or Tasmanian exceptionalism, or any exceptionalism. A universal is a universal. God did not say, "Thou shalt not commit adultery except in America." But most American Catholics are sympathetic with the moral revolution: if the ideals are too high for our liking, well, then, let's lower them so we can feel good about ourselves and avoid guilt. But either the Church is the voice of Jesus Christ on earth, supernaturally and infallibly guaranteed by Almighty God to reveal His will, or it is not. If the Church is *not* what she claims to be, then it is the most idolatrous, blasphemous, and arrogant thing in the world. But, then, where did all those saints come from? If the Church is Satan's kingdom, how can darkness give birth to such light? And if the Church is the kingdom of light, why would anyone but a dimwit want to dim it?

**Archbishop Roger Mahony**: It is crucial to keep in mind that the Church is not a debating club or society of explorers.

**James G. Hanink**: Does separating sex from commitment help teen-agers grow up? Does driving a wedge between sex and procreation enhance or trivialize our sexuality? Honest answers tell us that it is Catholic teaching, not current American mores, that genuinely liberates.

**Sheldon Vanauken**: Some of the American Exceptionalists may go into schism. But they are generals looking for an army, and they will be shocked at how few of the laity will follow them. The proof of this is in the full churches and seminaries where the orthodox faith is taught, and the empty ones where the trendies and Neo-Mods have taken over.

**Walker Percy**: I am a convert of 40 years standing. One of the great attractions of the Church for me was its unity-amid-diversity, a mystery indeed but clearly not unrelated to Christ's commission to Peter in Matt. 16:18 — this and the no less mysterious historical fidelity of the Catholic Church to this commission, through decay and renewal, for some 2,000 years. If I should now discover that I belong to a church consisting of a loose federation of flocks and bishops, my first reaction would be that I could have saved myself a lot of trouble if I had become a Methodist or Episcopalian — no offense intended.

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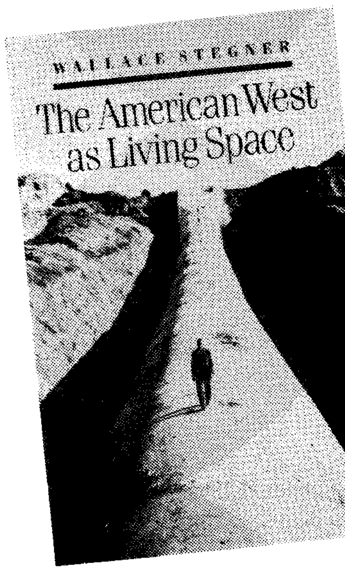
en described the novel, Dreiser's first in ten years, as a "shapeless and forbidding monster—a heaping cartload of raw materials for a novel, with rubbish of all sorts intermixed—a vast, sloppy, chaotic thing of 385,000 words—at least 250,000 of them unnecessary," Dreiser readily wrote off his old defender as not only wrong-headed but clearly dispensable—as, in a way, he was.



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If any one sentence in Mencken's long review best renders his assessment it is this one: "'An American Tragedy,' as a work of art, is a colossal botch, but as a human document it is searching and full of a solemn dignity, and at times it rises to the level of genuine tragedy." But then other important critics had called the novel a masterpiece—as a beginning point for their panegyrics. Mencken had been much more caustic in his reviews of various earlier books—particularly those of *The "Genius"* (1915) and *Hey Rub-a-Dub-Dub* (1920)—but back then Dreiser merely squirmed, expressed his annoyance, and continued in his plodding way. Now, in the postscript to his letter of February 8, he sputtered: "Who reads you? Bums and loafers. No goods. We were friends before ever you were a critic of mine, if I recall. And,—if any humble leman may speak up—may remain so—despite various—well—choose your insults." For the next eight years the two men neither corresponded nor saw each other. Dreiser renewed the exchange of letters in 1934, and the two men continued on more or less amicable terms until Dreiser's death in 1945, at which time Mencken began a correspondence with his widow.

In his first letter to Helen Dreiser, who had been one of Dreiser's many mistresses for twenty-five years before their marriage the year before his death (Dreiser had refused to divorce his first wife, Jug, in order to avoid paying alimony), Mencken wrote that Dreiser's death had left him "feeling as if my whole world had blown up. We had met only too seldom in late years, but there was a time when he was my captain in a war that will never end, and we had a swell time together. No other man had a greater influence upon my youth." If Mencken exaggerates the influence of Dreiser upon him he does so out of kindness to Helen, whose years with Dreiser were hardly happy ones. A month later he recalls the bitterly cold night Dreiser and Helen stopped off in Baltimore on their way South: "It was, to be precise, on December 12, 1925, for my mother was desperately ill in hospital and died the next day. I remember how I resented his leaving you sit in the cold car up the street, and how I resented likewise his aloof indifference to my mother's illness. It was a long while afterward before I ever felt close to him again." And then, immediately following, the attempt to understand and hence forgive: "But I should have known him better. There was a curiously inarticulate side to him, and it often showed up when he was most moved. If I had another life to live I think I'd attempt a long study of him, trying to account for him. But it is now too late."

Five days later, in answer to Helen's letter saying she didn't remember the visit in December 1925, Mencken repeats his recollection, understandably etched for good in his memory:

> I remember that December day very clearly. Dreiser parked your car on a hill about a block from my house, and we had been sitting at the fire for some time before I learned that you were in it. I thereupon rushed out to the place, dragged you out of it and brought you in to warm up. We had a drink or two, and then you and he started off for the South. My mother died the next day. I naturally expected some communication from him, but none came in. This irked me considerably, and we were on cool terms for some years afterward. Eventually, however, we came together again, and in his later years we were very friendly. I could never, of course, follow him into his enthusiasms for such things as spiritualism, Communism and the balderdash of Charles Fort [an eccentric mystic whose diatribes against modern science Dreiser had championed and tried to get publishers to print], but that never made any difference between us, for some of my ideas were just as obnoxious to him.

Here as elsewhere—particularly in the delightful essay "The Life of an Artist" he wrote for the *New Yorker* a couple of years later—Mencken is overly kind in what he chooses to remember about his old sidekick. In that piece, incidentally, he remarks that though he liked Dreiser very much and "greatly enjoyed hearing him discourse in his ponderous, indignant way, suggesting both the sermons of a Lutheran pastor and the complaints of a stegosaurus with a broken leg," Dreiser's remarks sometimes set his teeth on edge, "for I was a born earthworm and he had an itch for such transcendental arcana as spiritualism, crystal gazing, numerology, and the Freudian rumble-bumble, then a scandalous novelty in the world." From the portrait Mencken draws, one might conclude that Dreiser's major flaw was no more than the credulity that enabled others to take advantage of him. Which is as it should be. It would be out of place in such a recollection to include any of the darker truths; besides, Mencken was never one to snitch on a friend.

But the fact remains that Dreiser was a self-centered cad, almost the match in bounderism of Hemingway. As W. A. Swanberg's biography (dedicated, by the way, to the memory of Mencken, "who knew Dreiser at his best and worst, and fought for the best") clearly reveals, Dreiser rarely told the truth or acted honorably in his dealings with friends, publishers, agents, or anyone else for that matter. Moreover, he was (like Hemingway) insanely jealous of other writers, especially Sinclair Lewis. Nor did he see anything untoward about plagiarizing a fellow writer. In two instances (concerning Sherwood Anderson and Dorothy Thompson), he was caught redhanded, and the damning evidence was loudly proclaimed in the newspapers. His numerous secretarial aides, mostly women, received little or no pay for the Herculean labor of editing and correcting his manuscripts. In all money matters, he lied instinctively. Even his vaunted sympathy for the lower orders and the downtrodden was largely bogus, an exercise in self-aggrandizement. His political views were not just stupid, which one might forgive, but dishonest as well. For example, when he went to Russia in 1927, innocently expecting to be greeted by Stalin, he realized at once that his Russian guides showed him only what they felt he should see, and his diary contains one long lament over the inefficient and stupid system of government in the USSR. "I'd rather die in the United States," he noted, "than live here." After insulting most of his Russian hosts, he returned home to write bitter indictments of the capitalistic system and praise the Russian experiment to the skies. But his ostensible admiration for the Soviet system didn't prevent him from acting like a true capitalist, as evidenced by his incorporating himself in order to avoid paying income taxes. After the Hitler-Stalin pact, he praised the Nazis and went about the country preaching pacifism. When Hitler invaded Russia, Dreiser just as suddenly began crying for American intervention—even though that meant helping the English, who were, he believed, the instigators of the war in the first place.

That Mencken and Dreiser differed so radically both in temperament and intellect only adds to the interest one takes in their correspondence. Reading Dreiser's clumsy letters, with all the misspelled words, the fractured syntax, the elephantine attempts at humor, I couldn't help recalling Mencken's devastating critique of the Dreiserian manner in the long essay in *A Book of Prefaces* (1917). There he wonders if Dreiser ever got anything "properly describable as pleasure" from his dogged accumulation of mere words. And then he adds: "To the man with an ear for verbal delicacies—the man who searches painfully for the perfect word, and puts the way of saying a thing above the thing said—there is in writing the constant joy of sudden discovery, of happy accident. . . . But what joy can there be in rolling up sentences that have no more life and beauty in them, intrinsically, than so many election bulletins?" Still, he always insisted that deep down in that welter of words there lived a true artist who would long outlive his day. With that assessment few people today would argue. But one will look in vain for that artist in the letters.

At the beginning of her long—rather too long, it seems to me—introduction to *Mencken and Sara*, Marion Elizabeth Rodgers gives two reasons for publishing the correspondence, though to do so might seem an intrusion on Mencken's and Sara's strong sense of privacy. First, "few people know that Mencken married," and second, "fewer still know anything about his wife." Now, many people know next to nothing about Mencken, but those who know something surely know that he married. Moreover, various of the many books on Mencken, particularly those by William Manchester, Sara Mayfield, Carl Bode, and Charles Fecher, tell us a great deal about Sara Haardt. For the additional information provided by Rodgers we can be thankful, though some of what she says and the way she says it must cause the judicious to grieve. I have no difficulty in believing the testimony of her acquaintances that Sara was intelligent, witty, charming, and quite good looking. (At least one of the photographs reproduced here makes undeniable the last of those attributes.) Nor do I doubt her talent as a fiction writer, having recently read some of her stories. But I cannot believe that Mencken's influence on Sara "may have helped her pave the way for the Southern literary renaissance. . . ." Nor do I know what to make of the statement that such writers as Thomas Wolfe and William Faulkner "expressed a sympathetic attitude to the South that for Mencken would have been inconceivable." The fact is that neither of those writers expressed such an attitude toward the South. As for Mencken's thinking their attitude "inconceivable," one must remember that he admired Faulkner's stories and published some of them in the *Mercury*. It is true though that he never cared much for Wolfe, at least not enough to publish anything Wolfe sent him. The day after Wolfe's death in Baltimore in 1938, Mencken wrote the novelist James Stevens that his contacts with Wolfe had been "rather brief and casual. I met him several times in New York, but that was all. My wife was a great admirer of his books, but my own view of them was rather less enthusiastic. It seemed to me that they needed editing."

For that matter, at times Rodgers's editing needs editing. For example, she mistakenly identifies Mencken's reference to "an old fellow named Stewart, a newspaper reporter of 40 years practice" as a reference to Stuart Pratt Sherman, thus confusing first name with last name and not even noticing the different spellings. One can understand her not knowing who the "Stewart" was (it is unlikely that anyone today could identify all the references), but she certainly should have known that Sherman was not a newspaperman (he was a professor of English at the University of Illinois for most of his short career) and, furthermore, that he died in his middle forties. Elsewhere she identifies Gerald W. Johnson as "Gerald White Johnson" and then, incredibly enough, tells us that "White was to join Mencken on the Baltimore *Evening Sun*," etc. Such errors indicate that she is not very conversant with the materials at hand. She does, however, tell us a great deal about Sara that is new, at least to me, though her assessments of Sara's fiction don't really help much. As, for example, in this free-floating critique: "In [Haardt] a new type of story situation, rather than plot, dominates, and the artistry lies in capturing the multiplicity of actual experience." But such quibbles do not really diminish Rodgers's achievement, which is certainly considerable.

From the time of their first meeting in 1923, when Sara was a twenty-five-year-old instructor at Goucher College, Mencken was evidently infatuated, and

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thus readily accepted the role of mentor, constantly encouraging and advising his determined protégée in her literary efforts. But then he had been similarly attracted to a dozen other women before. Hence the question: Why Sara? Of all the theories concerning this (perhaps inexplicable) matter, the most convincing is that offered by Hamilton Owens in his Personal Note to *Letters of H. L. Mencken.* Owens says that, though most of Mencken's friends discounted the likelihood of marriage because of his numerous dicta on the joys of bachelorhood, there still remained Mencken's famous comment on "The Bachelor": "The reason the average bachelor of thirty-five remains a bachelor is really very simple. It is that no ordinarily attractive and intelligent woman has ever made a serious and undivided attempt to marry him." Owens went on to say that several women of their joint acquaintance insisted Sara was making such an attempt, but he thought that only a partial explanation and certainly not the main one: "More likely there was something of a paternal or protective instinct involved. Sara, however clever and ambitious, was a semi-invalid during much of her mature life. She wrote under the handicap of continuous weakness and even pain. It was impossible for him not to feel concern for one so pretty, so amiable, so patient. Moreover, she obviously adored him." A year before their marriage in 1930, which was delayed because of her health, Sara's doctor informed Mencken that she had three years at the most to live. After her death in 1935 Mencken told Owens that he "had two more years of happiness than I had any right to expect."

The most fascinating of the letters, not surprisingly, are those in which Mencken comments on the passing scene, on events and people that directly concerned him—the Scopes Monkey Trial, the various political conventions, the enormous gallery of people he encountered in his travels or who called on him at Hollins Street. The most amazing thing about Mencken was his great catholicity of interests, the fact that he found so much in the world that delighted him—and that he had such a gift for translating that delight for the rest of us. Eudora Welty's advance praise for *Mencken and Sara,* unlike the usual puffs that publishers solicit for the adornment of book jackets, needs no qualification: "Mencken's letters to Sara reflect his working life on an almost daily basis—but they are of particular value in showing us an unfamiliar side of the man himself. The quick, urgent pages light up with his praise and encouragement, his teasing and nonsense. The private voice comes from deep reservoirs of tenderness, rugged patience, silent endurance. This is an absorbing and very rewarding book."

Of less importance than his letters to Sara, to be sure, but nonetheless eminently enjoyable, are Mencken's letters to the late Gretchen Hood. A native of Washington, D.C., Hood began her career as an opera singer; as a girl she had been advised by Madame Schumann-Heink to study abroad, which she did before beginning her professional life in London. She returned to Washington in 1923 during the final illness of her father, Edwin Hood, who had for forty years in that city been a prominent journalist and a friend to Presidents, Secretaries of State, and other such notables. In *The Zimmerman Letter* Barbara Tuchman recounts how President Wilson instructed Secretary of State Robert L. Lansing to "leak" to Hood the text of the telegram concerning the German plot to align Japan and Mexico against the U.S. in World War I. Though Mencken doubtless knew Hood, he probably had never heard of Gretchen until the fall of 1926, when she wrote the *New York World* a letter recommending Mencken for President—

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"Why not Mencken for President? The idea has been gathering momentum in my mind for months. Think of erudition in the White House coupled with fearless ability!"

Her letter was probably occasioned by one from Mencken that had appeared in the *World* supporting Senator James Reed of Missouri for the Democratic nomination; he also was promoting the candidacy of another friend, Governor Albert C. Ritchie of Maryland. In any case, he responded with a polite note to Hood that he found it impossible to accept the nomination since he would be unable to "make oath to support the Eighteenth Amendment." To which she answered that his nomination would effectually invalidate the amendment, thus leaving him no choice in the matter; he had to accept the call to lead the nation back into the fold of civilization. Thus began a correspondence that lasted three and a half years, during which Mencken wrote nearly 250 letters, postcards, and telegrams to Hood. In this bright little volume, entitled *"Ich Kuss Die Hand": The Letters of H. L. Mencken to Gretchen Hood*, Peter W. Dowell includes slightly more than half of those missives, having wisely chosen to exclude "those letters which largely recapitulate others that appear herein, simply confirm engagements mentioned elsewhere, or are otherwise incidental." Professor Dowell's editing of the letters is in every way admirable, as is his introduction.

In a long interview (not mentioned by Dowell in his edition) that Hood gave a reporter from the *Washington Post* about her relations with Mencken, published June 24, 1973, there is a curious, even comic, error which still puzzles me. About half way through the interview, one encounters this parenthetical marvel: "(Years later she described her brief marriage to Mencken. 'I left the clod after only one month and ten days. . . . If only I'd tried him out first, I'd never have married him.')" On first reading this years ago I did a double take, to put it mildly. Either the reporter had gone to sleep at the switch, or else Hood, then in her 87th year, had somehow come to believe that she really married Mencken. A closer reading of the piece proved beyond doubt that the reporter was at fault—as was his editor on the *Post* for allowing such palpable nonsense to be printed. And now here, in one of the explanatory notes she wrote for the letters, she recalls a conversation she had with Mencken about the status of her virginity (the things people talked about in those wicked times!) when she revealed that she had "been married way back in 1914, but left the clod I'd wed, after only one month and ten days together, never to see him again." A month before their first meeting, Hood apparently asked Mencken, believe it or not, about the status of *his* purity, to which he answered: "I am amazed that you should raise any doubts about my chastity. It is one of the marvels of the modern world. If I had sacrificed it I might have been a star in the movies by now."

Though Mencken frequently refers to their plans for marriage, which was to take place once he occupied the White House, he invariably does so in such jesting manner that Hood should never have been in doubt about his sincerity. As here, for example: "But would connubial bliss be wise? I have some doubts about it. Wouldn't it be better to go down into history as the only Virgin President ever heard of. I hate to think of those sacred precincts given over to carnal recreations. Give this thought your prayers." In fact, the letters seldom ascend to any topic of more serious nature. To be sure, Hood was deadly serious in her effort to snare the Sage, but he was no less intent on keeping her at arm's length. When she (apparently) complained to Mencken that Nicholas Longworth, Speaker of the House (when Hood brought the two men together they got on famously, as did Mencken with Alice Roosevelt Longworth), had made a pass at her on the way home from a dinner at which Mencken and Longworth had evidently outdone themselves at putting away the alcoholic refreshments, she did not receive the sympathy she expected: "I am amazed by what you say of our eminent friend. It shocks me first to hear that he forgets himself, and secondly that a poor working girl should be blind to the great honor he does her. How many women have been necked by *two* candidates for the sacred office?" A week later, evidently in answer to another attempt to enlist his fealty, he wrote: "I still think you are unappreciative of Nick. You gals are all too sniffish. He is one of the greatest Americans of his time, and yet you gag when he tries to neck you. Suppose Aimee McPherson were to tackle me? Do you think I'd complain? By no means. It might make me suffer spiritually, but I'd think of the honor." One can only wonder what Hood wrote to occasion this response: "Your references to living in sin shock me. Such gross wickedness had better not be mentioned. Even thinking of it is foreign to my nature. I am strictly orthodox in that department, and abhor the heresies of Greenwich Village."

In his brief, pungent notes, Mencken touches on all his favorite topics, from food and drink to the music he had heard or played with the Saturday Night Club, and from politics to religion. (He was then busy at work on *Treatise on the Gods*, his own favorite of his many books.) After remarking that he had attended a funeral and had to attend another the next day, he adds: "What I object to is the obscene way in which the undertakers look at me and rub their hands. Certainly I must hold out until 1932. Then for a bronze casket, and a salute of 21 guns! You are to wear no veil!"

Before leaving for Houston to cover the Democratic Convention in June 1928, he was in a prophetic mood: "I look for bloodshed at Houston. The Pope, as you may know, has landed 5000 Jesuits at Galveston, and they are now hiding in the swamps. When they emerge every Christian man in the place will fall upon them. I expect Tom Heflin to be nominated." For those who may have forgotten, Senator "Cotton Tom" Heflin of Alabama was one of the virulent anti-Catholics who bolted the party after the nomination of Al Smith, whom Mencken strongly supported in the election. A few days later, he described the Republican Clown Show in Kansas City as "the usual dull obscenity—roars all day and yells all night. . . . If I must be nominated in 1932 by such vermin I'll be almost tempted to decline." Incidentally, in several letters to other correspondents, particularly those he didn't know very well, Mencken apologized for enjoying the quadrennial shows. He admitted they were obscene, but he still found them irresistible.

Although these letters to Hood never indicate any stronger emotion than that of hearty friendship, she professed to having suffered the worst shock of her life when she learned in the summer of 1930 that Mencken was to marry Sara Haardt. Indeed, she admitted that she "never got over it." Five years later she wrote Mencken a letter of condolence (included in this volume) on the death of Sara, and he answered. He also wrote her three other letters, but they never saw each other again. ☐

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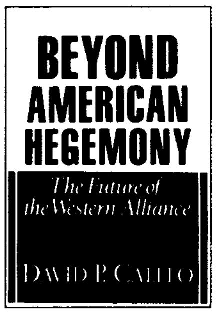

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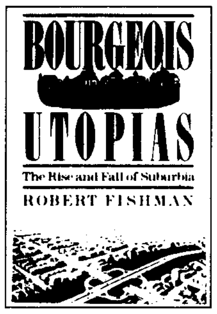

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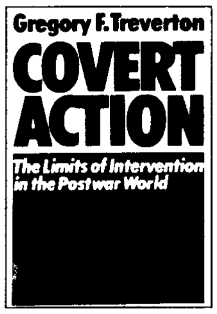

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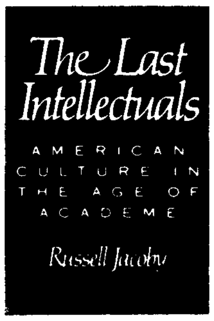

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# I REMEMBER BLOOMINGTON

Former residents and employees recall a fabled Midwestern hamlet.

*The Midwest—specifically Bloomington, Indiana—is built into every joist and lattice of this magazine. It was in Bloomington, in a trailer park, that the magazine was founded (as* The Alternative*, a counter-salvo to the radical movement at Indiana University) and there it remained and grew for eighteen years, with headquarters first in a farmhouse outside of town, and finally in a walk-up office above the renowned Betty Jean candy shop on the courthouse square.*

*During those years, the magazine drew into Bloomington a steady freshet of bright young people who shaped the* Spectator *with their vitality and humor and hard work. After varying lengths of time they moved on, most of them to jobs in government or journalism, and at last, in 1985, the magazine left too, for a new base in Washington, D.C. We flatter ourselves, however, that the magazine retains as one of its primary purposes the preservation of the mundane Midwestern values of common sense, individualism, and general cussedness.*

*Nostalgia can usually be had on the cheap, and for that reason we have dedicated ourselves in this anniversary issue to looking forward, to prognostication and soothsaying, avoiding as far as possible the gooey sentimentality that sometimes smothers such commemorative efforts. But a bit of gooey sentimentality is hardly out of place. Accordingly, as a tribute to our Bloomington roots, we have asked some former Hoosiers to recall their days at the magazine and in the Midwest.*

### *Ronald E. Burr*

What I remember most about Bloomington is the countryside. Nearly all Americans think Indiana is a vast expanse of flat, endless pastures and cornfields—the kind described in the opening chapter of Booth Tarkington's *The Gentleman from Indiana*. The glaciers indeed leveled the northern part of the state, but God stopped glaciating about thirty miles south of Indianapolis, and that paradise is known as Southern Indiana. The land is rocky, hilly, well forested, much of it unfit for any farmer's plow. Bloomington, before Indiana University grew to behemoth size and adopted pretentious airs, used to call itself the "Gateway to Southern Indiana."

The "gates" open as you leave Bloomington and travel south past the old Speedway Cafe. Most of the next winding ninety miles on state road 37 pass through the bucolic Hoosier National Forest until you reach the mighty Ohio River, the natural border with Kentucky. The territory extends as far west as New Harmony, site of Robert Owen's experiment in socialism, and east to Vevay, birthplace of Edward Eggleston, author of *The Hoosier Schoolmaster* and the first of the great Hoosier writers. In between are such sites as Buzzard's Roost, the famous caves at Wyandott, the virgin forest of Spring Mill State Park, and the falls of the Blue River in Milltown.

Nature predominates here, and you can see fox, deer, raccoon, squirrel, and a wide variety of birds. The birds were my favorite. Although I lived in town, a bird sanctuary was only ten minutes from my apartment. One Saturday I was tramping through the woods when, much to my surprise, three great blue herons appeared, flying gracefully in the distant sky. I returned to that site every year, and continued to see the elegant herons.

One evening, a few weeks before *The American Spectator* moved to Washington, D.C., my best girlfriend and I drove from Bloomington through the rolling hills of Brown County to the village of Story for dinner at an old general store, since converted into a restaurant. Afterwards we walked outside into the cool late-summer evening to the car, but before leaving we heard the melody of a whippoorwill. We sat in the car a long time and listened to him sing. Now that we are in Washington, a town impressed with power and man-made objects, I often think of that whippoorwill singing every evening outside the general store in Story, Indiana, and how lucky I was to hear him.

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*Ronald E. Burr is publisher of* The American Spectator.

### *Neil Howe*

Born and raised in the academic pleasure domes of California, I came to Bloomington in 1972 expecting to set foot on Martian landscape. Instead I found a world that clearly had more to do with my country than where I had come from: goodtime stony bars, rattling quarry trucks with no brakes, leather-faced farmers, half an apartment that rented for $37.50 per month with utilities (what does a cup of coffee go for now in New York?), ugly winters of mud-rain-snow drizzle, dazzling ice storms that left an extra window on your car after you rolled the inside window down, dirty and unimported 4x4s (definitely not designed for recreation), young twang-speaking mountain couples in from Kentucky to work on the assembly lines, waitresses that said "yes sir," and a gas stove that sometimes whooshed when you lit it in the morning. You hardly noticed the university, except for the stray bell-bottoms you noticed in the most unlikely part of town. Then, of course, there was the magazine, something that hardly an inhabitant cared about—not because of what it said, but because it was in writing. For my most memorable evening, I thank Richard Nixon's price controls. On the day a new issue was to be printed, I found that newsprint had been rationed in the Midwest. All that night I drove through southern Indiana, page proofs in my trunk, looking for a newspress that had extra paper; I finally found one somewhere near Bean Blossom, and the issue was ready just about the time the sun was breaking over the plains to the east.

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*Neil Howe was managing editor of* The Alternative *from 1972 to 1974.*

### *Joseph P. Duggan*

Bloomington during the 1970s was not a culinary capital, but it left me with some gustatory memories. The Hoosier university town was a place where one could find honest-to-God American food. I do not mean anything resembling the 1980s "new American cooking," no goat-cheese blue-cornmeal pizza or the like. Bloomington's great contribution to the national gastronomy was a hamburger of timeless dignity.

The genius behind this accomplishment, Leon Hinkle, had his establishment on the limestone heights along the town's west end. Hinkle had no use for grilling—why risk drying the meat and impart a distracting flavor of smoke? His hamburgers were fried, and the result was gray, greasy, juicy, and delicious.

It would be misleading to generalize from the one example of Hinkle's. Alumni of the Snopes School of Culinary Art were well represented among greater Bloomington's chefs. For every friendly, unpretentious, down-home good eating place in the area, there must have been a dozen friendly, unpretentious hash houses with plainly terrible food.

There was a guileless, stubborn quality to the preparation of bad food in some of Bloomington's diners that leaves me mystified still today. Probably it would take a Democratic administration at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to uncover how Gib and Denzil's Restaurant was able to extract every vestige of flavor from fresh ingredients. So, too, with Ladyman's Cafe. Ron Burr once estimated a fortune could be made by scraping the boiled-away vitamins from Ladyman's ceiling and selling them to a pharmaceutical firm.

I don't think any of us could have made it without liquid forms of the staff of life. At the Walnut Lounge we found Pabst Blue Ribbon and Busch Bavarian, cold and fresh and popularly priced. The bar also provided a kind of soul food for the man in a hurry—cellophane sacks of Tom's Fried Pork Rinds, pickled eggs, and pigs' feet bobbing in stout jars of vinegar and Red Dye No. 3. Other establishments, of course, offered similar food and drink, but only the Walnut Lounge offered the ministrations of Dave Effingham.

Like all great bartenders, Dave had a talent for listening. His strength and good humor deterred rowdiness. His patriotism was unvarnished and refreshing in contrast with the attitudes then prevailing across town on the Indiana University campus. If the Tower Commission had asked my advice, I'd have said there was nothing wrong with the NSC that couldn't have been fixed by putting Dave Effingham in as watch officer in the Situation Room. When George Nash next updates his history of the contemporary conservative movement, let us hope he acknowledges the colossal debt owed to this Hoosier's Hoosier.

---

*Joseph P. Duggan was a summer intern at* The Alternative *in 1972 and 1975 and assistant managing editor in 1976-77. He is now special assistant to Ambassador Edward Rowny.*

### *Adam Meyerson*

Many of my Yale '74 classmates went off to Oxford or the Peace Corps after graduation. I chose a truly foreign country: southern Indiana. For a northeastern city boy, my three years with what was then *The Alternative* offered an introduction to America's "heartland."

Bloomington itself was a cosmopolitan center, the home of world-class chamber music, splendid student opera at $4 a ticket, scholarship on esoterica ranging from Tibet to fungi, as well as college basketball at its Bobby Knight finest. It was also a hothouse for every species of pederast, Marxist intellectualoid, and college town charlatan. Bloomington's best restaurant was run by an ashram started by a Brooklynite named Rudi, short for Rudranadra; its buxom waitresses worked for free and

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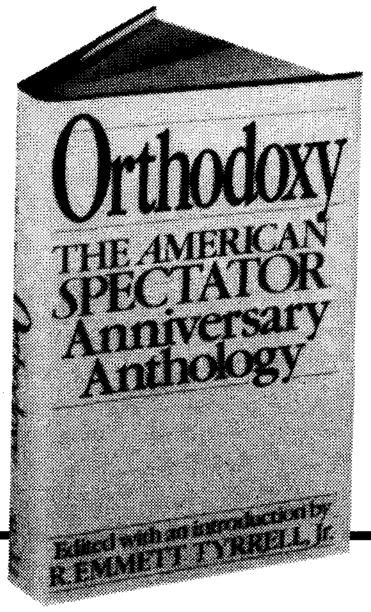
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slept with their religious master to gain spiritual energy.

Traveling through southern Indiana with the late Professor Charles Hyneman, I learned a deep respect for the republican virtue of past generations in the rural Midwest, and an appreciation for the upward mobility of Kentucky hillfolk who had found opportunity in the quarries and assembly plants outside Bloomington. But I also came away with a sense that the Midwest was in spiritual trouble, that it had lost its industrial inventiveness and, more important, its moral foundations. Both Jonestown and the Manson murders were perpetrated by Hoosiers.

What did I, then a Jack Kennedy-Hubert Humphrey-Adlai Stevenson liberal, learn from Bob Tyrrell and the Jolly Boys at *The Alternative*? That principled conservatism could be combined with high spirits, zesty writing, and personal generosity. I owe my conservatism to Tyrrell's influence.

---

*Adam Meyerson, editor of* Policy Review, *was managing editor of* The Alternative *from 1974 to 1977.*

### *Elizabeth Kristol*

Bloomington was the coolest city I ever lived in. It didn't have the great street food of New York, and it didn't have the cheap designer clothes of Boston, but it had the biggest drugstore I'd ever seen; a place near Indiana University where you could get lemonade with crushed strawberries in it; a campus with little streams running through it; and a music building with a sweeping curve of practice rooms to play piano in.

I never understood what wasn't parallel parking until I saw my first shopping center parking lot. Every Saturday night I would leave my wallet at home and hike a mile to the drugstore where I would kill a couple of hours (arguably, given the alternatives, still not a bad way to spend an evening). New York has lots of little drugstores; I had never seen the full-blown suburban species. There was every kind of beauty product you could dream of. The shampoo aisle was my favorite: this was the mid-seventies, when it was imperative to place health foods in products that ended up nowhere near the digestive tract. Shampoos with honey or wheat-germ; rinses with cucumber or egg or milk. Rows and rows and rows of the stuff. For a neophyte like myself it was inspiring.

What would a Soviet émigré make of all of this, I always wondered (really, I did). I imagined he would be filled with a mixture of nausea at the spectre of excess, and giddy optimism at the sheer variety. This sophisticated political analysis completed, I would stroll home through the darkness to my apartment on Lincoln Street.

I also associate Bloomington with the German language, since I was taking an intensive German class during the time I was there. I slaved for the course, since I was head over heels in love with my teacher; I used to loiter in his office after every class, dragging out our meager contact by asking interminable questions about etymology. What a tease I was, even then.

School wasn't in full swing when I was there, which meant the town was peaceful and the campus a lovely place to hang out. Fourth of July was—amazingly—incredibly pleasant there. I dragged my mother out for a visit, and we sat on the grass and watched the fireworks. I know it was the first time I enjoyed fireworks in a civilized setting, and it may well have been the first time I saw my mother sit on grass.

---

*Elizabeth Kristol, a senior editor of* Insight *magazine, was* The Alternative*'s historian in 1976.*

### *Steven C. Munson*

I spent two and a half years in Bloomington as managing editor of *The American Spectator.* During my first year, the magazine celebrated its tenth anniversary with a dinner in New York City.

At the time, I recall an earnest and enthusiastic reader visiting the office and expressing his chagrin about the location of our anniversary celebration. His distaste for New York, and presumably for what it represented, was palpable. It was plain that despite his admiration for the magazine, he had missed something essential to its character.

That something—dimly apparent, I suspect, even to those who continued to view the *Spectator* as a college magazine long after it had broken away from Indiana University and gone national—was the kind of intellectual seriousness that makes political journalism effective. This seriousness of purpose quite comfortably coexisted with and informed the intellectual cutting-up that made the *Spectator* so entertaining and caught the surprised attention of so many young readers, such as I was, in the early and mid-1970s. The *Spectator* not only made us laugh and salved our souls by really giving it to the left, it also spoke to our sense that the battle for control of the political culture was no joke at all, but a fight to preserve the values of democracy and decency.

Being in Bloomington—a place as far away spiritually as it was physically from the source of leftist thinking—made it possible for the *Spectator* to emerge with a fresh, energetic, and independent voice. Nonetheless, since the magazine was in the thick of the struggle against left-wing ideas, it was only natural that it should have celebrated itself ten years ago in New York, the center of our political-cultural life.

Since 1980, that center has gravitated toward Washington, and so have many of the writers and editors who are part of the *Spectator* community. The *Spectator* itself has followed this migration. But Bloomington will always be the true home of a magazine that has stood for so long in brave opposition to the political-cultural hegemony of the left.

---

*Steven C. Munson, news specials chief at the Voice of America, was managing editor of* The American Spectator *from mid-1977 through 1979.*

### *Whit Stillman*

Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana in the seventies was the Mecca for sarcastic American right-wingers. For short-termers on the magazine life was almost entirely pleasant there. Bloomington was not the typical Midwestern backwater—it was "Indiana's Nightclub" and Monroe County the state's "educational and recreational capital." (Famed Lake Monroe is located there, with beautiful Brown County next door. For those not aware of Brown County—an admission that provokes incredulity from people in the area—it is like a little bit of Maine rising from the Midwestern plain, which can really use it.)

Owning and operating a motor vehicle was a simple matter in Bloomington. Bad housing was available at reasonable prices—unlike New York. Indiana University's huge, pleasant library was open to all and open all evening—something New York lacked. Bloomington's Silver Dollar Disco was far less expensive and snobbish than its New York equivalent—and there was no one to go with. The city's vegetarian population was large and its

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vegetarian cuisine unsurpassed. It was, in short, a great place to work and read.

For the magazine a side benefit of its Indiana location was the constant revitalization of its staff as the short-termers—younger and unmarried—left for the East Coast in search of love. Finally, the permanent staff followed them.

A personal note: On the darker side, during my Bloomington stay I heard National Public Radio for the first time—it is a university town—and got in the habit of listening to it every day. This has caused me a great deal of sadness in the years since then.

---

*Whit Stillman was publisher of* The American Spectator *in 1978.*

### *Erich Eichman*

When I first started working for *The American Spectator* I had already been living in Bloomington for several years. At the time, I was renting a room in a run-down, two-story house not far from the campus of Indiana University. Perversely, my memories of Bloomington often return to that house.

A local bartender lived there for a while, and for a long time another fellow, a native of Indiana, lived on the porch. He collected food stamps. Mentally speaking, these two were by far the healthiest people in the house during the three years I lived there. Mostly it served as a temporary resting place for a changing collection of demoralized graduate students. One of them, I remember, was in something called religious studies. He was from Michigan and wore an earring. I overheard him once talking heatedly about the alienation of the working classes under capitalism, although I don't think he had learned about the subject firsthand.

Of the two graduate students in English in the house—I had been a third—one was, toward the end of my stay there, involved with a professor in an extra-academic way. The other, a man from Texas, was showing signs of becoming a "lifer," that is, someone who would leave Bloomington, if ever, in a box. I remember him settling into a chair across the room from me one day not long after I had joined the magazine. "I saw *The American Spectator* on the newsstand today," he said, looking a little annoyed. "How can you work for that rag?" I think this question fairly sums up the Bloomington intelligentsia's judgment of the magazine.

I don't remember what I replied to my housemate that day. I probably turned the conversation to his unfinished dissertation. But I do remember thinking, maybe a little melodramatically, that the question itself was a clear sign that I had done something right with my life. I still think of it that way.

I sometimes wonder what happened to the bartender. He was a nice guy and as far as I know had nothing against *The American Spectator,* if he thought about it at all.

---

*Erich Eichman, managing editor of the* New Criterion, *was assistant managing editor of* The American Spectator *in 1978-1979 and its managing editor in 1980.*

### *John Podhoretz*

I was 19 when I went to spend the summer in Bloomington, Indiana as an editorial intern for *The American Spectator.* There I discovered, among other things, how to live on $125 a week (sparingly, even in a small town); that even in what seemed to me to be a hick university town, they showed West German movies about homosexual adolescents; that the place across the street from *The American Spectator* made the world's best chili dogs; that A&W root beer from the real honest-to-God drive-in is a wondrous delicacy; that Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* is one of the great novels in the English language.

These discoveries were certainly meaningful, but they paled in comparison to what I was compelled to learn when the production manager of

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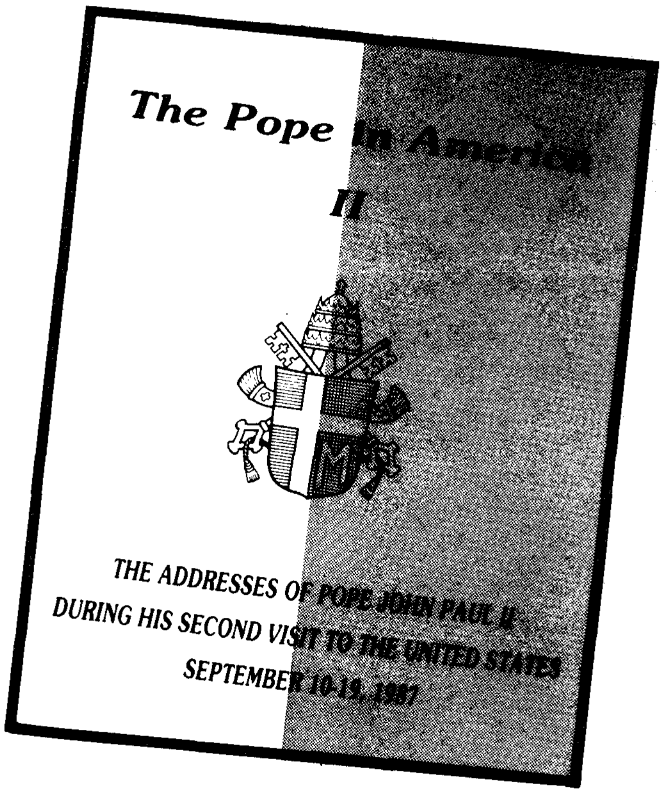
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*The American Spectator* had to go out of town on a family emergency. It was the very week that the magazine had to be laid out, pasted up, artwork photographed, and completed pages brought to the printer in Indianapolis. There was no one around to get the issue finished save Richard Starr, my fellow intern, and me.

I took the job of typesetting and Richard took the job of layout. For five nights we worked until the wee hours, my fingers flying across the keyboard of the typesetter, endlessly correcting misspellings and misplaced punctuation, Richard continually going back into the stat room to reshoot one of the half-tone illustrations. We joked, kibitzed, worried, and, with a great feeling of exhilaration, got it done on deadline.

So, primary among the reasons I feel grateful toward *The American Spectator* is that I was given a great gift during the summer I spent in Bloomington: the gift of competence.

---

*John Podhoretz, a* TAS *summer intern in 1980, is a contributing editor of* U.S. News & World Report.

### *Andy Stark*

A year in Bloomington can inspire an amount of amnesia sufficient to obliterate all memory of the experience; fortunately, though, a year at *The American Spectator* cultivates the aptitude for apocrypha necessary to replace it. For example, the year I am referring to was actually only seven months. With this warning, here is a "reminiscence":

Soon after coming to Bloomington, and needing a place to live, I called a woman who had placed an ad in the local paper, the *Bloomington Herald-Telephone*. Toward the end of a forty-five minute phone interview, she said: "Tell me . . . on a scale of zero to ten—zero being completely and utterly conformist and ten being totally and ruthlessly nonconformist, where would you place yourself?" "Zero," I immediately replied. There was a pause. "That's amazing!" I recall her finally exclaiming. "Nobody's ever said *that* before!" I eventually moved in with her, but the arrangement lasted only a week or so because—as that little exchange should have made obvious but somehow didn't—we had completely misunderstood each other.

I next moved into a large suburban home where I shared space with the owners—two members of a swing band—and the girlfriend of one of them—who ran the Bloomington Clinic for Rape Victims. The girlfriend was named Debra, and the band was called "Pink and the Naturals." (The word "Pink" referred not to the leader of the band, but to a "state of mind.")

"Pink" had originally been music students at Indiana University. When I lived with "Pink," they had just embarked upon that rite of passage in which newly minted I.U. Bachelors of Music would hang around Bloomington in the year or so after graduation, coalesce into little bands or quartets, and work closely but informally with one of the many retired music-world greats who seemed to have gathered in the outlying countryside. There was a symbiosis between the old pros and the young protégés, in which ersatz adulation was traded for vicarious glory. In the case of "Pink," for example, they worked very closely for some months with Jimmy Durante's old lyricist. As for Debra, she took a kind of sisterly liking to me, and throughout the year she set me up with some of the women she met through her work. And it was Debra who first pointed out to me that "therapist" is "the rapist" pushed together, and that "mentor" is "torment" transposed.

---

*Andy Stark, a policy adviser to the Prime Minister of Canada, was* TAS*'s assistant managing editor in late 1980 and the first half of 1981.*

### *William McGurn*

For this suburban Jersey boy there remain two vivid impressions from Bloomington. The first is of the town square, with the illuminated clock face set off majestically by the dark Hoosier sky. On the grounds were the traditional stern monuments to the city's war dead, and just across the street Wiles Drugstore still had a counter where you could sit down and order a vanilla egg cream from Old Man Wiles himself.

That, and trailers. I'd never seen them before, least not with humans using them as permanent homes. My introduction came early. On the drive down from the Indianapolis airport Paul Vivian, *TAS* researcher and officer in the Indiana National Guard, solemnly advised me—providing, of course, I got the job—to invest in a trailer first thing. He himself had one on the outskirts of town, and he spoke of it with the knowing satisfaction of a man who'd bought Xerox at five. He went on about it for a good chunk of the car ride, and somewhat nervously I asked how many in Bloomington lived in these things. "Oh, everyone," he said with that same self-assurance.

Now, since I was a graduate of Notre Dame, this was not my first time on Hoosier soil. But the neo-Gothic splendor of Our Lady's campus constitutes almost a state unto itself, rather like the Vatican, and my forays into the Indiana heartland had generally been confined to Lock's Liquor World, Interstate-80, and the Scottsdale Mall. Trailers to me still meant Appalachia, or Long Island residents on holiday.

In Bloomington, however, I learned that the trailer is to our day what the log cabin was to Lincoln's. That, for example, Ron Burr and Bob Tyrrell had each lived in trailers; indeed, that the *Spectator* itself had been born in one, just across from the I.U. stadium, at 1200 North Indiana, Lot #6. It soon became apparent that gross length was the sole criterion for the discriminating trailer dweller: Burr, for example, was given to boasting about the day he and John Von Kannon had moved up to a "40-footer," which in Manhattan terms is roughly equivalent to an apartment with hardwood floors and a view of the park. One of the priorities of trailer life, moreover, was that the owner's car had to be worth more than his home. Virtually every Corvette registered in

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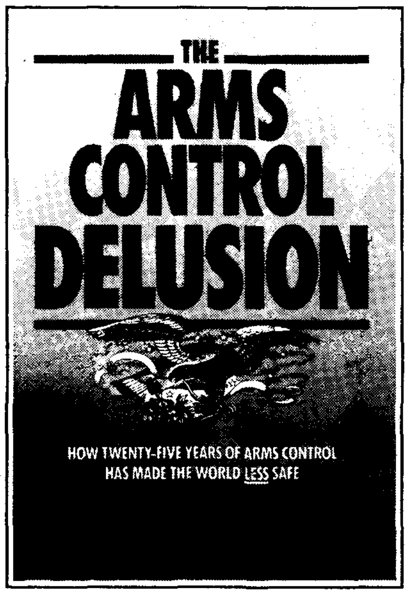
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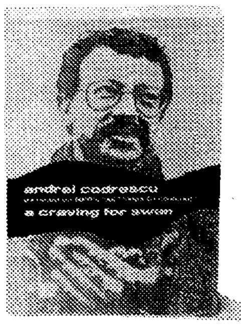

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Monroe County therefore returned to a trailer park after an evening of cruising. The particularly well-heeled would also have a pick-up truck, for the lady of the house.

Sad to say, I never got around to buying a trailer myself. I just couldn't afford the payments on the Corvette.

---

*William McGurn, deputy editorial page editor of the* Asian Wall Street Journal, *was assistant managing editor of* The American Spectator *from 1981 to 1983.*

### *Malcolm Gladwell*

I began my stay in Bloomington in the basement of a house owned by a hellish and unusually large woman, who drove an aging Ford pickup which filled my apartment with fumes each time she belched up the driveway. Waving a letter from my doctor, I escaped from that lease after a few months and ended up in a long, roach-infested garret above the town bookstore. That meant I had instant access to the largest selection of books on corn-husking and 'coon-hunting in the continental U.S., but the bad news was that my building was also home to Bloomington's only two punk rockers, who capped their nightly imitations of angry British youth by puking all over the stairs.

No one at *The American Spectator* sympathized with my plight. The rest of the staff lived in renovated farm houses and fancy apartments built in Bloomington's version of the international style, which meant they were designed in Indianapolis. Sometimes on weekends I would get invited over to their houses, where I would perch on red-vinyl couches, sipping Strohs, and putting in my two-cents' worth on Bobby Knight, guns, or whatever else the topic of conversation happened to be that day. But mostly I was left alone in my apartment, where I would watch hours of "Hee-Haw" re-runs in a largely vain attempt to put my new life into some kind of perspective.

I sound like I disliked Bloomington. I didn't. I was there during the glorious summer of 1984 when the Chicago Cubs won the National League East and came as close as the Cubs can to winning a pennant. Often that summer I would gather with all the other male members of the *Spectator* staff in a neighborhood bar to drink enormous amounts of beer and cheer for the Cubs. I was a Blue Jays fan. But it didn't matter. On those warm Bloomington evenings all of us put aside our better instincts to root for the home team.

Then, too, on the outskirts of town there was a wonderful mall, where if you walked around long enough and took in all the sights and screwed up your courage, you could imagine that you were somewhere else entirely—like maybe Des Moines or Kansas City.

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*Malcolm Gladwell, a reporter for the* Washington Post, *was* TAS*'s assistant managing editor in 1984 and early 1985.*

### *Judy Mathews Tyrrell*

When I first met Bob Tyrrell nineteen years ago he was wearing a towel, something he is comfortable in even today. The walls of his $75/month Ellettsville farmhouse were emerald green and lined with books. Brahms' Double Concerto filled the air—in fact the elaborate stereo equipment was one of the few pieces of furniture in the rather spacious house. Some rooms were labeled. The bathroom (which worked well in summer, but not at all in winter after the pipes froze) was the John F. Kennedy Memorial John; the cellar, uninhabitable for all but rats and mice, was the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Room, and a favorite spot to entertain liberals. It was the most fun I had ever had!

---

*Judy Mathews Tyrrell has been a contributor to* The American Spectator *since 1969.*

### *Baron von Kannon*

When Andy Ferguson called and asked me to write about Bloomington memories, I knew immediately that I did not want to talk about the early days of the magazine, our fights with the New Left students and professors, the early support of the Lilly family and all of that, as important and nostalgic as it is.

Rather, I want to engage in nostalgia on a more personal level about the person who started the magazine and who has kept it going for these twenty years.

*Spectator* readers are familiar with Bob Tyrrell's ideas and style. Most writers and staff—current and former —are familiar with his, ah, shall we say, eccentricities. But the dirty little secret about Bob Tyrrell is his compassion.

Compassion for a mixed-up twenty-year-old Indiana University sophomore who, in a two-semester streak of youthful stupidity, managed to flunk out of college. Bob spoke to the dean, got the sophomore enrolled in summer school, and put him on a regimen of class, study, and work.

And compassion for the same person eight years later when told he had leukemia. Full pay for the entire six-months' absence from work. Harried phone calls to friends around the country who phoned, wrote, and traveled to the Indianapolis hospital to visit. Staged editorial meetings in the hospital room to let the patient feel he was still part of the action.

Well, that formerly stupid sophomore made the Dean's list and was cured of cancer. And today, Bob's compassion is my biggest memory of Bloomington.

Thanks, Bob. ☐

---

*Baron von Kannon was publisher of* The American Spectator *until 1980.*

## AFTERMATH

by Kent Owen

No sooner than the last circus wagon had clattered out of town did all the lights gutter and quit. A failure of power, a failure of nerve? Nope, some simpleton had socketed a penny in the master fuse box. A fitting farewell to incandescence on the cheap. Thus did *TAS* take its leave of the old campgrounds, striking off for the vortex below the Beltway.

The official period of mourning is over, and the locals have recovered nicely from the setback to the mental economy. Even so, the environmental impact statement shows radical silliness is up 20 points and municipal liberalism limps along. Pork bellies hold steady. What has busied Bloomington ever since? If you gloss over the Baby Doe case, the second McCloskey-McIntyre campaign, "Hoosiers" The Movie, IU's NCAA basketball championship, the exploits/exploitations of Bob Knight, the small-town rocksodizing of John Cougar Mellencamp, and the usual number of ax murders, you get down to the Polychloride Biphenyls Trouble, seeping ineluctably toward hysteria. The problem is whether Westinghouse's dangerous sludge should be burned and blown away—as a federal consent decree orders—or eliminated through technologies yet unknown. If you live downwind of where the incinerator is supposed to be built, you can't be blamed for fretting. Hence local politics is much ado about a good riddance to PCBs as well as to toxic lawyers and technocratic consultants.

The courthouse is restored to resplendence, and enterprise quickens all around the square with the old Waldron block gussied up like a Gay Nineties beau. The Masonic Temple dislodged its occupants, installing financial planners and useful tradesmen in offices beyond the solemnity of Solomon. A slew of new-found fests makes the town merry, and Rand McNally says hereabouts is one of the nation's choicer locales for retiring, though neither the Marcoses nor the Duvaliers are fixing to settle.

The Saturday Evening Club (Alpha chapter) gathers to irrevere the personages of the hour, parse each tender platitude, and foretell the obvious. And every evening, as shadows fall across the limestone doughboy and the WCTU drinking fountain, a woman in mauve places a single perfect skunk cabbage on that hallowed doorstep next to the Betty Jean Shop. And thumbs her nose. Gone but not forgiven.

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*Kent Owen is the Bloomington-based Indiana editor of* The American Spectator.

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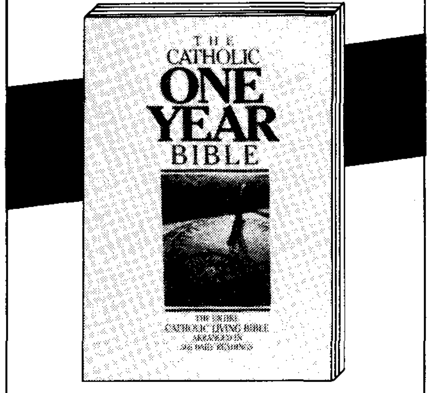
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## CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 9)

Piper he is not. As the sole breadwinner for two young sons and a wife, I can assure Mr. Bethell that I did not jump into the void on a whim. Those who resigned suffered financial hardship, in some cases severe. Careers were derailed. Two were forced to take jobs on the other side of the continent; Cheshire ended up in Phoenix (1,000 miles west of Houston); I found it necessary to leave the business altogether. It was not a cheap decision.

It is hard to understand why a journalist of Mr. Bethell's stature would drop his standards to defend the Unification Church. He explains that his motive is to defeat Communism. But it's also true that the church wines, dines, and flys Mr. Bethell to exotic places, and he covers for them when critics turn up the heat. If this is the deal, Mr. Bethell has to swallow a great deal to keep up his end of the bargain: a Catholic, he must defend a religious organization which teaches that his Lord was a failure. To combat the big lie, he defends an eternal one. And for what? A few pork chops and plane tickets?

This may be a harsh appraisal. I like Mr. Bethell's writing, although knowing he reported falsehoods in this instance lessens that opinion. As for the Unification Church being the linchpin in the fight against Communism, I can only agree with Einstein that God does not play dice with the universe.

*—Dave Shiflett*
*Vienna, Virginia*

*Tom Bethell replies:*
Mr. Shiflett's suggestion that by going on two World Media Association trips I entered into a "deal" with the Unification Church is completely unfounded, but perhaps indicative of his general reliability. He surely knows that there is indeed considerable doubt as to whether the Unification Church was "influencing the newspaper's editorial policy." Why doesn't he describe these events, "witnessed" by "senior members of the editorial page"?

There was some disagreement between the editor-in-chief, Arnaud de Borchgrave, and the editorial page editor, Bill Cheshire, over an editorial on Korea. At the end of it de Borchgrave claims that he told Cheshire: "Go ahead and write the editorial however you want." It is true that I did not speak to Cheshire, but even if de Borchgrave did tell Cheshire how to write the editorial, so what? How does that violate an "ironclad agreement" with the church not to interfere with editorial content? As I understand it, this agreement was between the editor-in-chief and the owners. De Borchgrave is the only one in a position to complain of church-related interference.

But let us assume the worst—that Rev. Moon himself told de Borchgrave what the editorial should say, and he in turn conveyed the dastardly instructions to Cheshire. I still can't understand how grown men like Mr. Shiflett can go to work in comfortable surroundings for a nice salary, five days a week and no heavy lifting, and then work themselves up into this great lather of indignation if the owner so much as drops a hint that he would like to have a say in the final product. It's so childish, ungrateful, and ungracious. If Mr. Shiflett thinks that his words are so important that they can't be touched by anyone, then he should go to work for himself.

To the reader of the *Washington Times*, at least, there is no evidence of church interference in the paper. The same can scarcely be said of other church-owned newspapers in this country. But because the Unification Church is unfashionable, disgruntled employees of the paper can always avail themselves of the "Moonie-control" cheap shot as they take their leave.

**D.I. Blues**
Both Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* and Bruce Bawer's fine review ("Kubrick Goes to War," *TAS*, October 1987) of that graphic but disjointed Vietnam war movie sent me hurtling back to my basic training days at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, in the winter of 1966. I know nothing about Bawer, his age, his grasp of the 1960s, or if he knew what it was like to be a soldier in those uncertain, troubling times. I do know that my experiences in boot camp back then are at odds with Bawer's observations, particularly this statement: ". . . would a young man who was this fat, this slow-witted, and this psychologically disturbed be admitted into the Marines in the first place? Was any D.I., moreover, ever as thoroughly inhuman as this one?"

The answer to both questions is an absolute "yes," and it is because of that answer that the first half of *Full Metal Jacket* disturbed me more than any war movie I have seen, made me fidget uncomfortably in my seat, and forced me to recall the worst times of a very bad situation.

Bawer should know that shortly after Lyndon Johnson was elected President, the United States began a massive military build-up and any branch of the service was taking whatever human fodder it was handed in the draft. On one particular night in January 1966, more than twenty thousand young men, myself included, were literally run through the induction center at Fort Dix, New Jersey, and then sent packing to forts all over the country—Fort Bliss in Texas, Fort Ord in California, Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri, Fort Benning in Georgia, and Fort Jackson, to name a few. And the military was not choosy on who put on a uniform. Frankly, it didn't have the time.

In fact, so many soldiers were jammed into Fort Jackson that there weren't enough of the old, wooden barracks to go around. The unfortunate slept in hastily erected tents. In the winter months in South Carolina, when it would snow one day and be sunny and sixty degrees the next or pour rain the third, Fort Jackson's hospital overflowed with soldiers. The worst disease was the fatal spinal meningitis, and it struck down several recruits and led to the quarantining of many forts, Jackson among them.

Our tough D.I.'s, some of them combat veterans, but mostly veterans of barroom brawls, sneered at the sickly soldier, ridiculed his illness, and bullied him into not going on sick call.

I was one of those sickly soldiers.

As a child I had suffered through a severe bout of pneumonia. My lungs were never strong, but that didn't matter during my pre-induction physical. I was listed as an able-bodied man and sent on my way without further ado. In the wind and the rain and snow and the slop I tried to keep up. Other recruits fell by my side and went off to the hospital for a few days and then returned refreshed and ready to go again. Some never came back.

On a night I'll never forget, the D.I. ordered us outside the barracks in our stocking feet and ponchos, because it was raining sheets of ice, and forced us to stand at attention, our weapons at port arms. How long we stood there I don't recall, maybe an hour, maybe two. When his cruel mind was satisfied he dismissed all the platoon, but me.

"Harris," he barked, "it's time we found out what kind of soldier you really are. You're to run around the company five times. Now get going."

The company area was made up of five barracks and a mess hall, perhaps a distance of three or four hundred yards. Five times around was about a mile. In my stocking feet I slogged through the sleet and the ice-slicked puddles, my lungs and throat burning and my heart pounding so loud it sounded as if it was inside my brain. I didn't sleep that night. I was feverish and coughed as quietly as I could in my pillow so that I wouldn't awaken the other soldiers. In the morning we marched a few miles to a training ground to learn the art of hand-to-hand combat. When we were finished we ran back to the company area, loaded down with gear and weapons. It was still raining and as we tried to dodge the deeper puddles I coughed and a great quantity of blood gushed from my mouth and nose. It ran down on my uniform and splashed to the ground with the rain. At first the blood startled me. Then it scared me and I jumped to a ditch by the side of the road we were running on, crying out the Lord's Prayer. My lungs were hemorrhaging. The flow of blood refused to stop and every time I tried to catch my breath, I sucked the blood back in my lungs. Not only was I bleeding to death, I was choking to death. The D.I., who was running behind the platoon, saw me bent over by the side of the road. He trotted up, cursing me, mother, and all my ancestors, and kicked me violently in the rear. I pitched forward, but refused to fall in the ditch. In my terror, I turned toward the D.I., sending a brilliant red spray of blood across his face, and for the first time I saw fear in the eyes of a man whose stock and trade was in putting the fear of God in other men. In that one fleeting moment, when our eyes locked, I knew I had exacted, in a macabre way, a pound of flesh from a man who even today haunts my dreams. In a way, the turning of my body, the spray of blood across a taunting face, was much like Private Lawrence firing a round from his full metal jacket into Kubrick's celluloid D.I.

But my moment of fear and hate was in another century, so far removed from today that a man like Bawer, although able to criticize the "artness" of such a powerful movie, lacks the real-life experience, it appears to me, to believe in the integrity of that movie.

*—Stephen L. Harris*
*Westport, Connecticut*

*Bruce Bawer replies:*

Forgive me, Mr. Harris, for being too young to have gone through hell with you at Fort Jackson. I'm sorry to hear what a terrible time you had. (I was in uniform at the time, too—Cub Scouts.) Given your experiences, of course, you couldn't help but identify with Private Lawrence—couldn't help but cheer for him, in fact—when he blew away his D.I.; and that's thoroughly understandable.

But think about it. You can't really compare the ill and emotionally overwrought—but sane—young man that you were to the retarded psycho of Kubrick's film. You *didn't* kill your D.I., after all, Mr. Harris, despite his cruelty: you suffered at his hands and went on to have nightmares about him for twenty years. Now *that's* reality; Lawrence's murder of his D.I., by comparison, is only cheap wish-fulfillment fantasy which, I'm sure, gratified the tormented hearts of many a former soldier the way that Charles Bronson's wasting of muggers in the *Death Wish* movies gratifies crime victims.

And naturally your own D.I. appeared utterly inhuman to you. But in a film that seeks to be taken seriously as art, no major character, not even Adolf Hitler himself, for heaven's sake, can be represented as purely, uncomplicatedly evil; the film should offer at least some nuance, some touch of human complexity—or, failing that, at least some hint of how this human being came to be so evil, so *un*complex.

Finally, although I'm quite aware that all sorts of human flotsam have served among the Few and the Proud, it still seems unlikely to me that an individual as obviously unsuitable as Lawrence could've gotten past even the most cursory draft-board inspection. And even if such a thing were possible, it hardly makes sense to place such a nutsy specimen at the center of what is implicitly meant to be taken as a typical Vietnam-era platoon.

### Pro-Life Futures

Regarding Charlotte Low's interesting article "The Pro-Life Movement in Disarray" in your October issue, no one can deny a tension between anti-abortion advocates primarily interested in philosophical rectitude and those primarily concerned about reducing the number of abortions in the immediate future. Nevertheless, I believe that disagreement over ultimate goals need not and should not undermine support for short-term measures that have the potential for reducing abortions without sacrificing moral or philosophical premises.

Recently the Administration announced two important measures aimed at reducing the incentive for women to have abortions. The first involves the revision of Title X guidelines affecting about $150 million in federal funds. These funds will not go in the future to any program that performs, promotes, or advocates abortion. The second is an educational campaign spearheaded by the Surgeon General aimed at alerting women to the medical hazards of abortion, both physiological and psychological.

These steps reflect an overt federal policy of discouraging abortion, which should be recognized as an important advance by all elements in the pro-life movement. But they also constitute a set of disincentives within the framework of legal abortion, which should help recruit support from a broad spectrum of Americans.

Virtually everyone agrees that abortion is morally undesirable. Who but a few abortionists and fanatics considers abortion a positive good? Even if abortion is regarded as a constitutional right, that imposes no obligation on the government to fund it.

A decade and a half after *Roe* v. *Wade*, we need to address not just the issue of legality of abortion, but also the environment of complacency, acceptance, and encouragement that enables more than a million abortions a year. While we continue to debate the thorny questions where there is no unanimity within the pro-life movement, much less society in general, we should unite on anti-abortion measures based on the existing social consensus that abortions are a bad thing.

*—Gary L. Bauer*
*Assistant to the President*
*for Policy Development*
*The White House*
*Washington, D.C.*

### Dolts and Dashers

Why does your magazine continue to print such offensive, snobbish, thick-headed reviews as was Jack Shafer's [of P. J. O'Rourke's *Republican Party Reptile*] in your September issue? Your magazine goes along with great quality and then prints such trash as Shafer's review. Its effect is like a thumbtack in a sandwich.

The problem with these types of essays or reviews is that it takes more space than the original review to adequately criticize the asinine and offensive nature of it. It's no wonder that Republicans always end up looking like fat white guys when the supposed intellectual edge of the party is carried on the blatherful minds of Jack Shafer and the rest of you effete snobs. If you don't appreciate O'Rourke's humor, then say so briefly and be done with it. I found it an extremely funny collection of essays and many times it carried a lot more punch than I'm sure Jack Shafer could ever deliver and more than most of your associates regularly do. There are many of us who share the ironies, jarring observations, and deeply held principles covered in O'Rourke's black humor.

In reading the review, it is obvious that most of it has little to do with O'Rourke's book, but is rather Shafer's limp joust of humor. It is, however, laughable that he would attempt to have us compare O'Rourke's bite with his soupy prancing.

The review's first sentence tells us Shafer's boorishness is well balanced by his lack of wit. And what an arrogant East Coast stink he is to suggest that which he does in his third paragraph.

It appears that Jack Shafer is a plodding keypuncher and O'Rourke is an undeniable artist of some questionable taste. Conservatism will never be more than a conversational tone among self-described acerbic wits at cocktail parties if it continues to be propounded by dolts like Shafer rather than dashers like O'Rourke. It will never take hold in any people outside of wine sipping debating cliques when your response to our sense of humor is much more infuriatingly offensive than our humor is to you.

*—James Hackett*
*Edwardsville, Illinois*

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# CURRENT WISDOM

### Badger Herald (University of Wisconsin)

Cultural notes intoned at a recent University of Wisconsin anti-war menagerie by Linda Evans, an idealistic and knowledgeable member of the New Left's fairer sex who is currently charged with bombings in California, Chicago, and New York:

I'm going to jail tomorrow so it's really, uh, you know. So you see and uh, and uh, a month and a half of freedom. I didn't know I was supposed to talk about our culture. I didn't know, uh, how I would label it but, uh . . . Psychedelic patterns in my head and, uh . . . There's really a lot to say and, uh, I'm just getting these vibrations of real power from us, you know, that we really, really are brothers and sisters and we need to understand to get together how much we . . . We have to make that count in the struggle that is happening and that's going to happen in the years to come because whatever evolves from the last year.

I'd like to speak to you a little bit about culture right now and about the way we are getting into each other, and getting into real relationships and stuff—building families and building tribes that can fight together. We seem a lot to be really turmoiled at this point probably because . . . and partly because I think people are responding to the repression in real scared ways. There are lots of indictments out, a lot of us are facing time in jail. Really heavy s---, you know.

The destruction of the earth is really what's happening, you know, we have a lot of responsibilities as white people in the f-----g belly of the monster to try and stop them in every way possible. And I think that we have to deepen our culture and deepen our understanding of who we are to be not just songs and music and dancing and dope and loving each other, but also build a different culture of struggle on every level.

*[April 1971]*

### Congressional Record

Another emotional moment on the floor of the United States House of Representatives, provided by the Rt. Hon. Richard Ottinger, Conscience of the House:

Mr. Speaker, it is nearly 30 years since the playwright Arthur Miller first shocked the American people with his "Death of a Salesman," a grim portrayal of the grueling life of a sales representative. Since that time, few advances have been made to improve the rights and working conditions of these important contributors to the American economy. They are in limbo between the powerful organizations of both labor and management. The salesman is not eligible for union membership; he has gained neither workmen's compensation nor unemployment insurance. The Willy Lomans of the United States still look to the Congress for the equitable working conditions they deserve. On their behalf, I urge my colleagues to lend their support to the Sales Representatives Protection Act.

*[March 30, 1977]*

### The Great Books Series

From what is bound to become one of the classic homosexual novels of all-time we lift these heart-rending passages in hopes that all our readers will wake up before it is too late, before the barbed wire is thrown up and San Francisco is turned into a veritable ghost town:

. . . Barbara interrupted her: "Margo, in most cases homosexuality is still a crime."

The group was silent.

Sandy broke the silence. "Shelly and I have talked about it. I think we've basically come to the decision that we'll leave the country if things get too bad. Go to Canada, I guess."

"You're really taking this seriously?" Margo was now shocked.

"Prohibiting homosexual teachers from working was one of the first repressive steps the Nazis took," Julie said. "Who's to say it couldn't happen here?"

"Women are freaked out," Sandy continued. "I see it in my practice. Women come in and they're scared. Even the non-political ones. But it's the Jewish lesbians who are really panicked. They talk about concentration camps for gays. It's very real for them." Sandy shook her head. "Them. It's very real for us."

*Choices*
by Nancy Toder
*[Persephone Press Book News, 1981]*

### Ms.

A fledgling feminist reveals how a confusion over female orifices can lead to a similar confusion over male protuberances and many messy situations:

The daughter of a friend took her first bath with a male cousin when they were both four years old. Being well brought up, she was silent about her anatomical discovery, but that night, as her mother tucked her into bed, she said: "Mommy, isn't it a blessing he doesn't have it on his face?"

*[March 1984]*

### Chicago Tribune

Vietnam's wonderful symbiosis of "military authority" and a "liberated attitude," as elucidated by the Rev. Jesse Jackson, in a discourse full of hope:

I believe we should look to the Third World for an answer. The message from there is clear: Through the proper use of money and a positive attitude, we can stimulate self-development and give the people a vision. It has been fascinating for me to observe what has happened in South Vietnam in the past year. The new Saigon leaders have spent little time talking about the Americans who carpet bombed and defoliated their country. Instead they have concentrated on rebuilding, putting people to work, inculcating new values and attitudes. They did it with military authority and a liberated attitude.

*[April 18, 1976]*

### New York Times

Proof that the pitiless wheel of history grinds all who stagger before it—even renowned *New York Times* columnists. This from a dispatch filed by the magisterial James Reston on January 27, short hours before the world was made aware of the nocturnal labors of Miss Megan Marshack:

It should probably be remembered that Nelson Rockefeller died at his desk late on a Friday night after almost everybody else had gone home for the weekend. He was a worker, a yearner, and a builder to the end.

He was not working when he died on the struggles, achievements and disappointments of his political life, but on the consoling influences of art, beauty and love in personal life.

*[January 28, 1979]*

### Washington Post

Dr. George Will begins to show the stress of presiding over history:

The ongoing emancipation of women is the country's finest social achievement.

*[January 9, 1983]*

### Nairobi Standard

From progressive Nairobi, a report on advanced electoral techniques as yet unknown even to the pols of Manhattan:

An oathing ceremony allegedly conducted by the sitting Member for Nyambene South, Mr. Jacob Mwongo, was a heated subject in the High Court yesterday when the advocate for the M.P., Mr. A. R. Kapila, rigorously questioned the witness who made the allegation.

Mr. Rimungi Arunja claimed on Monday . . . that Mr. Mwongo administered an oath to about 2,000 people at the home of a teacher called Mr. Muthinja of Mukuiru sublocation.

He himself was present at the oathing ceremony which Mr. Mwongo administered after stripping off his clothes so that it could be more binding and he was also among those who allegedly took the oath, he told the court.

At the suggestion of elders, Mr. Mwongo undressed and tied some banana leaves around his waist. After this, the witness went on, the M.P. held the hind legs of a live he-goat against his shoulders and went round the crowd cursing those who would refuse to cast their votes for him.

The court was told that two other naked men followed Mr. Mwongo beating the he-goat and saying "May those who refuse to vote for Mwongo die like this he-goat." The animal was then slaughtered.

The witness said that as a result of the oath, he changed sides and voted for Mr. Mwongo instead of the candidate of his choice, Mr. Ibrahim Gachiata. He could not do otherwise because he feared the oath dreadfully, he added.

*[April 23, 1975]*

### Washington Post

The incomparable *Post* reports on the hard times into which protest politics have fallen midway through the reign of Reagan:

"We are anti-Reagan women and we are voting, voting for our lives," the protestors sang as the straw-and-newspaper likeness of Reagan refused to burn. After repeated attempts, it finally collapsed into flame and ash. But the throng of U.S. Park and District police on hand did not move to arrest any of the participants.

Despite their best efforts to misbehave, the demonstrators were permitted to do just about anything short of charging the White House gates. For almost 30 minutes, they raced from intersection to intersection near the White House, blocking traffic with their bodies and their banners.

Police responded quickly by rerouting lunchtime motorists around the protestors. They never attempted to break up the impromptu roadblocks or take anyone into custody.

"Could you imagine a group of black demonstrators not getting arrested?" asked Suzette Rowe, a member of the Community for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV), which is organizing the protests, noting that most of yesterday's protestors were white. "This is disgusting."

*[October 2, 1984]*

### Santa Barbara News-Press

Sobering utterances from Jerry Brown, Governor of the great State of California, as he addresses students at the University of California at Santa Barbara:

"We can't abandon the essence of what is human, what is divine, what is sacred because that is the connecting path between what we are as individuals and what we are as a species, what we are as an ecosystem, biosphere, cosmos."

*[March 2, 1982]*

### New Yorker

From Alpo to the groin, the innocent origins of another of America's noble few:

Neil was twelve the first time he recognized in himself something like sexuality. He was lying outside, on the grass, when Rasputin—the dog, long dead, of his childhood—began licking his face. He felt a tingle he did not recognize, pulled off his shirt to give the dog access to more of him. Rasputin's tongue tickled coolly. A wet nose started to sniff down his body, toward his bathing suit. What he felt frightened him, but he couldn't bring himself to push the dog away. Then his mother called out, "Dinner," and Rasputin was gone, more interested in food than in him.

It was the day after Rasputin was put to sleep, years later, that Neil finally stood in the kitchen, his back turned to his parents, and said, with unexpected ease, "I'm a homosexual."

*[May 31, 1982]*

### New York Review of Books

Something for the gray *NYRB*'s gloomy pedants to experience true joy over—in a reminiscence of Tennessee Williams ("the Bird"), the late Gore Vidal recounts a long lost lunch and but one more Camelotian tragedy:

Actually, the Bird had never heard of Kennedy that day in 1958 when we drove from Miami to Palm Springs for lunch with the golden couple, who had told me that they lusted to meet the Bird. He, in turn, was charmed by them. "Now tell me again," he would ask Jack, repeatedly, "what you are. A governor or a senator?" Each time, Jack, dutifully, gave name, rank, and party. Then the Bird would sternly quiz him on America's China policy; and Jack would look a bit glum. Finally, he proposed that we shoot at a target in the patio.

While Jackie flitted about, taking Polaroid shots of us, the Bird banged away at the target; and proved to be a better shot than our host. At one point, while Jack was shooting, the Bird muttered in my ear, "Get that ass!" I said, "Bird, you can't cruise our next President." The Bird chuckled ominously: "They'll never elect those two. They are much too attractive for the American people." Later, I told Jack that the Bird had commented favorably on his ass. He beamed. "Now that's *very* exciting," he said. But, fun and games to one side, it is, of course, tragic that both men were, essentially, immature sexually and so incapable of truly warm *mature* human relations. One could weep for what might have been.

*[June 13, 1985]*

### St. Louis Post-Dispatch

**A chilling analysis of Nixonian America by the UPI's Nicholas Daniloff, Kremlinologist and fictioneer:**

For this former Moscow correspondent, one of the sobering reflecturies [sic] of democratic practice, there is no guarantee against the development of totalitarian attitudes in the White House.

Of course, the degree to which White House officials may have been guilty of totalitarian attitudes is far less than in Stalin's Russia. There have been no purge trials, executions or sentences of exile. But there are some startling similarities.

*[December 1973]*

### Old Oregon

**The sound of a United States Congressman on the prowl 2,029 miles from home and surrounded by pretty faces:**

The keynote speaker, U.S. Rep. Paul Simon of Illinois, called on graduates to help build bridges of understanding to the rest of the world in order to help avert a nuclear catastrophe. . . . "This country spends more on construction of one-quarter mile of interstate highway than on all faculty and student exchange programs with the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact countries," Simon told the crowd.

"That's clearly not a rational ordering of priorities" at a time when people "have the power to destroy the world," the Eugene native and former UO journalism student said.

"If 50 years ago we had had a foreign exchange program with Ronald Reagan at the University of Moscow and Yuri Andropov at the University of Oregon, we would be living in a vastly different world today," Simon said.

*[July 1983]*

### People

The Rt. Hon. Lowell Weicker returns from Cuba, having smoked long and diligently the Castro weed:

The eight-and-a-half-hour encounter left the senator with the impression of "a man of enormous intellect and idealism. Castro's been known to snow people, but he didn't snow me," Weicker says. "We flew all over the place and I saw what he's done with my own eyes. They deliver a quality of life to those people they've never known before. By Caribbean and South American standards, it's Park Avenue. I want to know why the U.S. isn't there. We can gain the affection of the Cuban people by working side by side."

*[November 10, 1980]*

### Foreign Policy

A stupendous elucidation of the Ayatollah Khomeini's Divine Fascism from Dr. Richard Falk, a Beethoven in the foreign policy art, famous for his many requiems to the American Republic and for numerous symphonies to foreign brutality:

One of Washington's problems in formulating a position toward Khomeini's movement may be its relative ignorance of the ayatollah's philosophy and of Shi'ite Moslem doctrine generally. It is entirely different from the harsher Sunni variety that currently prevails in Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Pakistan, among other Moslem nations. The entourage around Khomeini, in fact, has had considerable involvement in human rights activities and is committed to a struggle against all forms of oppression. The constitution he proposes has been drafted by political moderates with a strong belief in minority rights. Contrary to the superficial reports in the American press about his attitude toward Jews, women, and others, Khomeini's Islamic republic can be expected to have a doctrine of social justice at its core; from all indications, it will be flexible in interpreting the Koran, keeping the "book of research" open to amendment and adaptation based on contemporary needs and aspirations.

*[Spring 1979]*

### St. Louis Globe-Democrat

A breathtakingly percipient essay into the polity of progressive Cuba from the typewriter of Miss Sally Quinn, an American Tocqueville:

An attitude of sexuality is as pervasive in Cuba as the presence of Fidel Castro. You can feel sex in the atmosphere, on the street, in conversation, in people's actions. The Cubans seem to be thinking of it much of the time. And it necessarily colors their thinking. It is very Latin, without the old traditional cultural censorship. The women are openly involved.

This is why, to understand Communism in Cuba, the difference in their political and ideological concepts, it helps to understand the nature of their sexuality.

And to understand Cuba it helps to understand Mohitos. They have these drinks in Cuba. They call them Mohitos. Rum. Soda. Sugar. Lime juice. A sprig of mint. Everyone drinks them.

It changes everything. Two or three Mohitos and you begin to understand. You begin to see more clearly. Yes, Cuba is a Communist country. But laid back. Very laid back.

*[March 26-27, 1977]*

### The Great Books Series

**Proof of high intellectual attainment in Hollywood, California, as Mr. Orville Schell interviews Mr. Warren Beatty, metaphysician:**

"Do you think that politics has just come down to people craving intriguing personalities?" I ask Beatty . . . thrusting my tape-recorder microphone before him.

"Umm. Well . . . You mean, Why do I like Jerry Brown? Well, umm . . . It's basically just a question of whether you think he is a good man or not, isn't it? And you draw these conclusions from a lot of things. In the long run what you're looking for in a politician is someone who's . . . you know . . . someone who's in the middle of his body."

*Brown*
by Orville Schell
*[Random House, 1978]*

### Inquiry

A glimpse into the inscrutable mind of Mr. Joseph Heller, champion of civil liberties, the whales, solar energy, a totally sanitary environment, personal growth, and an end to this CIA-inspired gabble about "boat people" and Pol Pot:

A phrase that really gets to me, for instance, would be one of those neoconservative references to Vietnam as a national tragedy, but only because we lost. That thought fills me with ire. . . . The implication is that if we had won, the war would have been somehow less tragic. People with that mentality, I have to admit, impress me as being the scum of the earth.

*[May 1, 1979]*

### Esquire

The nocturnal cognitions of feminist Sally Kempton:

I used to lie in bed beside my husband after those fights and wish I had the courage to bash in his head with a frying pan. I would do it while he slept, since awake he would overpower me, disarm me. If only I dared, I would mutter to myself through clenched teeth, pushing back the realization that I didn't dare not because I was afraid of seriously hurting him—I would have loved to do that—but because even in the extremity of my anger I was afraid that if I cracked his head with a frying pan he would leave me.

*[June 1983]*

### Washington Post

Nicholas Lemann caught *in flagrante delicto* describing the peace-loving reformers of the Communist Workers Party who, nonetheless, passed on violently when anger marred their otherwise peaceful "Death to the Klan" rally last November:

The communists who died that day were, like those who survive, strong, intelligent, loving people. Two of the five were doctors. One was a medical school dropout. Another was an honors graduate of Duke University, and another a student leader at Bennett College here. All had given up promising careers to dedicate themselves to bringing about a violent revolution in America.

*[June 22, 1980]*

### San Francisco Chronicle

**A legendary California newspaper records the breathless observations of one of the U.S. Senate's most enormous hinds, upon returning from glorious and inscrutable Peking:**

[Senator] Percy, clad in brief blue swim trunks and a peach sportshirt, and equally exhilarated by the trip, jumps right into the conversation with a surprising remark: "Mao is the George Washington of his country," he contends. "It's incredible—the signs and sayings of Mao are everywhere. Example: 'We shall harness the Yellow River'—that's all he says and suddenly millions of people are volunteering to work on it."

*[September 20, 1975]*

### New York Times

The most stupendous lucubration, the most divine sonority, the finest logical thread ever woven by an American statesman in this century! Sublime, poetic, super-duper—a Gettysburg Address for jugheads! What follows are excerpts from the Wonderboy's recent utterance on energy lifted from the redoubtable *Times* of New York, our national newspaper of record:

This is a special night for me. Exactly three years ago on July 15, 1976, I accepted the nomination of my party to run for President of the United States. I promised to you a President who is not isolated from the people, who feels your pain and shares your dreams and who draws his strength and his wisdom from you. . . .

Often, you see paralysis and stagnation and drift. You don't like it.

And neither do I.

What can we do? First of all, we must face the truth and then we can change our course. We simply must have faith in each other. Faith in our ability to govern ourselves and faith in the future of this nation. Restoring that faith and that confidence to America is now the most important task we face.

It is a true challenge of this generation of Americans. One of the visitors to Camp David last week put it this way: We've got to stop crying and start sweating; stop talking and start walking; stop cursing and start praying. The strength we need will not come from the White House but from every house in America.

We know the strength of America. We are strong. We can regain our unity. We can regain our confidence. . . .

We are at a turning point in our history. There are two paths to choose. One is the path I've warned about tonight—the path that leads to fragmentation and self-interest. Down that road lies a mistaken idea of freedom.

The right to grasp for ourselves some advantage over others. That path would be one of constant conflict between narrow interests ending in chaos and immobility. It is a certain route to failure.

All the traditions of our past, all the lessons of our heritage, all the promises of our future point to another path: the path of common purpose and the restoration of American values. That path leads to true freedom for our nation and ourselves. . . .

I will do my best, but I will not do it alone. Let your voice be heard. Whenever you have a chance, say something good about our country.

*[July 16, 1979]*

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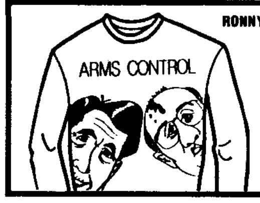

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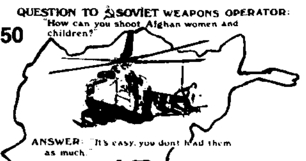

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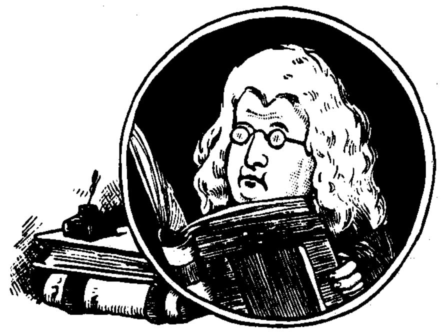

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**Treason of the Intellectuals**, by Julien Benda. Any edition in English. **The Tomb of Ts'in**, by Edgar Wallace. Rinehart Potts, 1223 Glen Terrace, Glassboro, N.J. 08028.

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**Mine Were of Trouble** by Peter Kemp. **The Quest for Corvo** by A.J.A. Symons. J. V. Stribling, 1416 El Campo, Dallas, TX 75218.

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**Decline and Rise of Europe**, by John Lukacs. **The Great Powers and Eastern Europe**, by John Lukacs. Griffin Smith, Jr., 605 Ivory Dr., Little Rock, AR 72205.

**An Eye for a Tooth**, by Dornford Yates. **The Winding Stair**, by A.E.W. Mason. Harry Warfield, 226 West Rd., New Canaan, CT 06840.

**The Political Theory of a Compound Republic: A Reconstruction of the Logical Foundations of American Democracy as Presented by The Federalist**, by Vincent Ostrom (Center for Study of Public Choice, Blackburg, VA, 1971). Nicolaos S. Geeker, 4745-H Walden Circle, Orlando, FL 32811.

**Any books by Churchill** except his World War II history and **Pharsalia** by Lucan (English translation). Tom Berdeja, 801 N. Willett, Memphis, TN 38107.

**Edwyn Bevan, Symbolism and Belief**, (1938), paperback or hardcover. Melinda Maidens, 60 Minell Pl., Teaneck, N.J. 07666.

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**Inside the Whale**, by George Orwell. **Dictionary of Orthodox Theology**, by G. Demtrakopoulos. Noel Anderson, UTA Library, Box 19497, Arlington, TX 76019.

**HEIMSTRINGLA** by Snorri Sturluson, translated by L. M. Hollander, (University of Texas Press, 1967), or translated by S. Laing, (1844 or 1961-4). Joseph Zeboula, P.O. Box 59, Thomaston, CT 06787.

**Cyril the Squirrel**, by Leonara Fry. **Half Magic**, by Edward Eager. Richard M Sloane, 141 Mt. Pleasant Ave., Gloucester, MA 01930.

**Laughing In The Hills**, by Bill Barich (Viking Penguin Inc., 1980). Albert E. Wehan, III, 417 W. 7th St., Erie, PA 16502.

**General George Henry Thomas: A Critical Biography**, by Donn Pratt (Cincinnati, 1893). **Leaders, Dreamers and Rebels**, by Rene Fulop-Miller (New York, 1935). John J. Burke, Box 458, Roscoe, N.Y. 12776.

**The Socialist Phenomenon**, by Igor Shafarevich (Harper & Row, New York: 1980). Kenneth J. Wolf, 504 Crescent Court, Frankfort, IN 46041.

**Mary Magdalene** and **One Sky To Share** by Raymond Leopold Bruckberger. Bill Green, 2718 Grove St., Irving, TX 75060.

**Take to the Boats**, by Captain George H. Grant (Little, Brown) and **The Heels of a Gale**, by Captain George H. Grant. John F. Campbell, 8407 Via Ruidosa, Scottsdale, AZ 85258.

**Deadlines** by Henry Justin Smith. **Wife of the Centaur**, by Cyril Hume. H. W. Lytle, P.O. Box 277, Volcano, HI 96785.

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**Index to The Colophon (the first 20 parts) and the index to The Colophon revised to include the entire Colophon**, by Dean Keller (Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, New Jersey: 1967-68). William H. Morgan, 11376 Rupley Ln., Dallas TX 75218.

**Finite-Difference Equations and Simulations**, by Francis B. Hildebrand (Prentice-Hall: 1968). **Laplace Transforms**, by N. W. McLachlan, paperback (Dover: 1962). Dr. Henry E. Heatherly, 529 Alonda, Lafayette, LA 70503.

**The Fighting Douglas MacArthur**, by Newton Clarke (New York: 1965). **My Fifteen Years With Douglas MacArthur**, by Sidney L. Huff (New York: 1964). Todd Smith, P.O. Box 3077, Springfield, MO 65808.

**History of Greenland**, Vol. 1, by Finn Gad (McGill University Press). **A List of Geographical Atlases in the Library of Congress**, Vol. V-VIII, by C. C. Le Gear (Government Printing Office). Michael Perna, P.O. Box 127, Bronx, N.Y. 10461.

EDITORIALS

(continued from page 11)

ward insists that the story is true. Considering the pressure Woodward was under, I am sure any competent therapist would say, "It's true for you, Bob. It's true for you." □

# A GRAND LADY

*New York*

In St. Patrick's Cathedral the friends of Clare Boothe Luce prayed for the repose of her soul at an august service, the kind that in years past moved the venerable agnostic, H.L. Mencken, to appraise the Roman Catholic Church as his favorite religion owing to the beauty of its ceremonies. The other day, had he stood with former President Richard Nixon, U.N. Ambassador Vernon Walters, William F. Buckley, Jr., and other mourners, listened to the music, and sniffed the incense, he might have forsaken Bach for Rome. The Mass was that beautiful!

But then Clare Luce was beautiful. She was style and substance. She was art, and the art endured through eight decades as her wisdom and sense of the absurd grew with her. These last years in Washington were busy with politics and ceremony. Men and women half her age were sorely pressed to keep up with her, and in the most demanding departments of life they usually had to concede. She was constructed of tougher stuff.

Last January I had a small dinner party for her, high in the expectation that she would be heartened by the presence of younger conservatives such as Secretary of the Navy John Lehman and Arms Control Director Kenneth Adelman, members of a generation now in middle-age, who soon will be carrying on the defense of freedom that she and her generation managed so resolutely. The company that night may have inspired her, but it did not daunt her.

Indeed she was the inspiration. There were her stories about the years with Henry Luce, the years as American ambassador to Italy, the later years when along with Bill Buckley she was a major conservative voice and strategist. Over espresso, she laid out her closely argued positions on present dangers. And then over brandy she concocted a stupendous practical joke to be played out at the expense of a renowned foreign-policy institution whose politics are not hers but whose officers would gladly accept a gigantic bequest from the estate of Clare Boothe Luce. In elaborate detail, suggestive of the accomplished playwright that she was, she outlined our roles in the caper. A day or so later she decided against it. It would have been hilarious, but perhaps not quite proper for a woman of 83 to be teasing the stuffed shirts of our foreign-policy establishment.

That evening she was carrying an onerous burden, which never showed. For months her beloved stepdaughter-in-law, Nancy Luce, had been dying. Clare, though frail with age, flew back and forth to New York to be with her. The months had worn on, but Clare never flagged in her devotion. Then, Nancy Luce died, and the light steadily went out of Clare Boothe Luce's life too.

Clare was a lady in the fullest sense. With her death following so soon upon the death of her great friend Bill Casey, it is every day apparent that the conservatives are losing the illustrious generation that emerged from World War II ardent to confront the perils of the postwar period and to create the movement in defense of liberty that elected a President in 1980. The leadership of this generation has now devolved to those in their sixties.

The day after Clare was buried George Bush stepped forward, declaring his readiness to run for the presidency and to carry on the conservatives' moment in history. He was the youngest naval aviator in World War II. He turned his back on the comforts of East Coast privilege after the war to become an entrepreneur in the remote towns of West Texas. He has spent two decades in public life. He feels he is prepared to lead the country and his conservative allies after the manner of those who have gone before him.

But *Newsweek* magazine on its cover of October 19 worries that George Bush might be a wimp. That is a peculiar word for our dainty media to be applying to anyone, given the fact that many in the media are not all that sure that wimpiness is so bad. Surely *Newsweek* would not apply wimp to a New Age helpmate, a maker of fresh breads, a warm, sensitive male willing to show his emotions when the going gets tough. So *Newsweek* applies the term to Bush for no better reason than he is a gentleman.

His engaging new autobiography, *Looking Forward*, makes that quite clear while retailing all the evidence necessary. What he may be is a man fully equipped to step in where Clare Boothe Luce's generation left off. Certainly Bush has the experience and the manners. The tests ahead will tell all. □

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December 4, 1987
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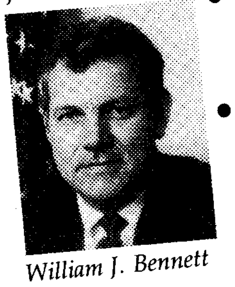

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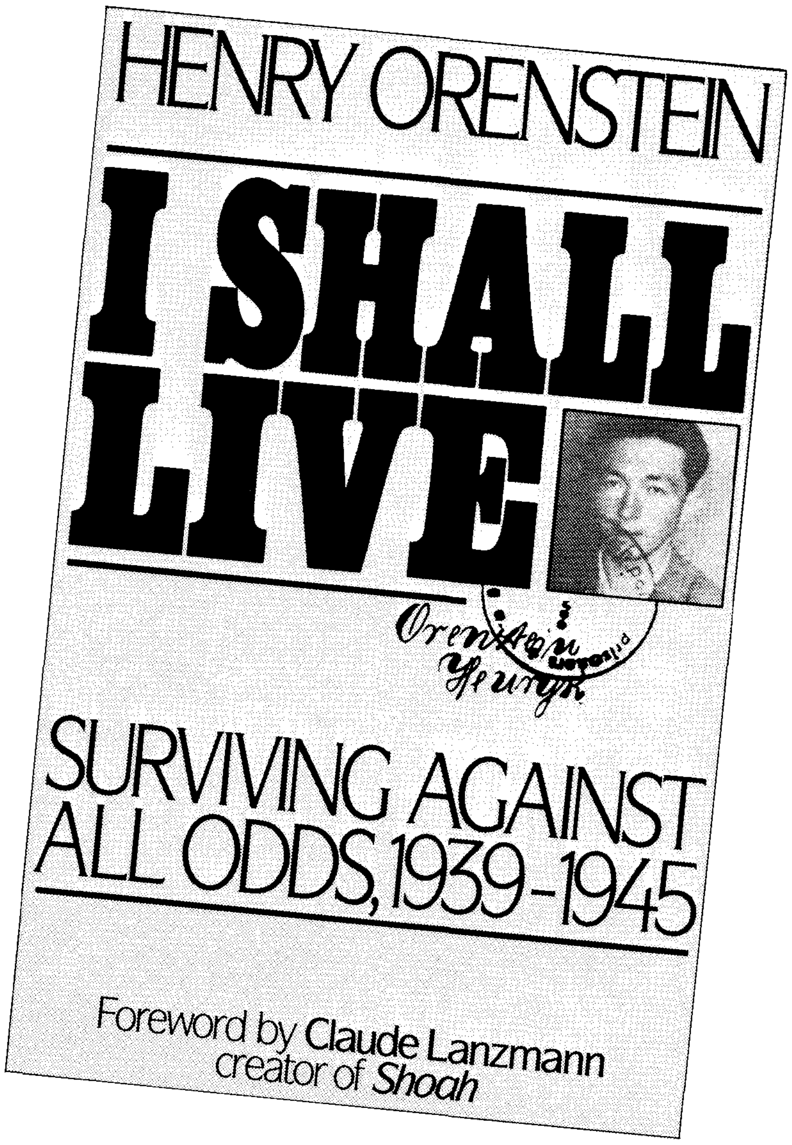
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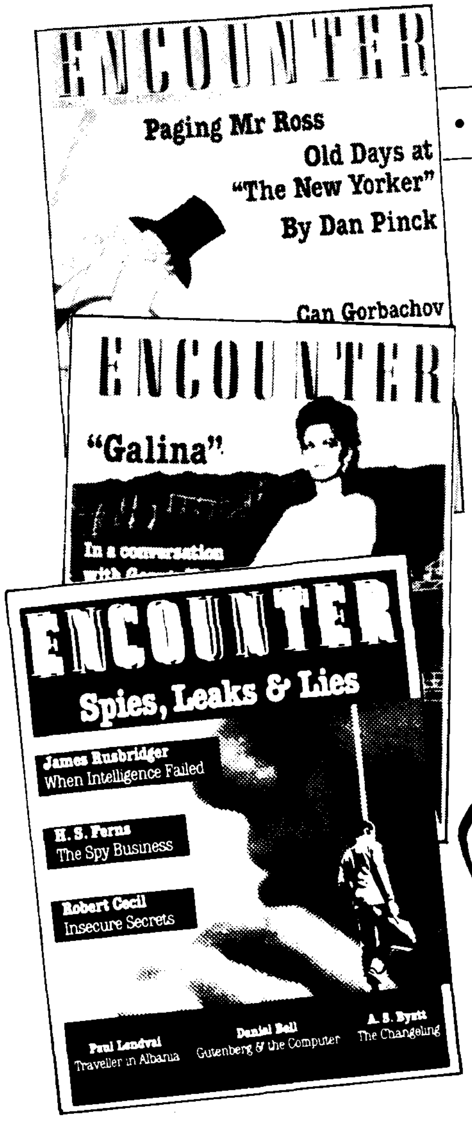
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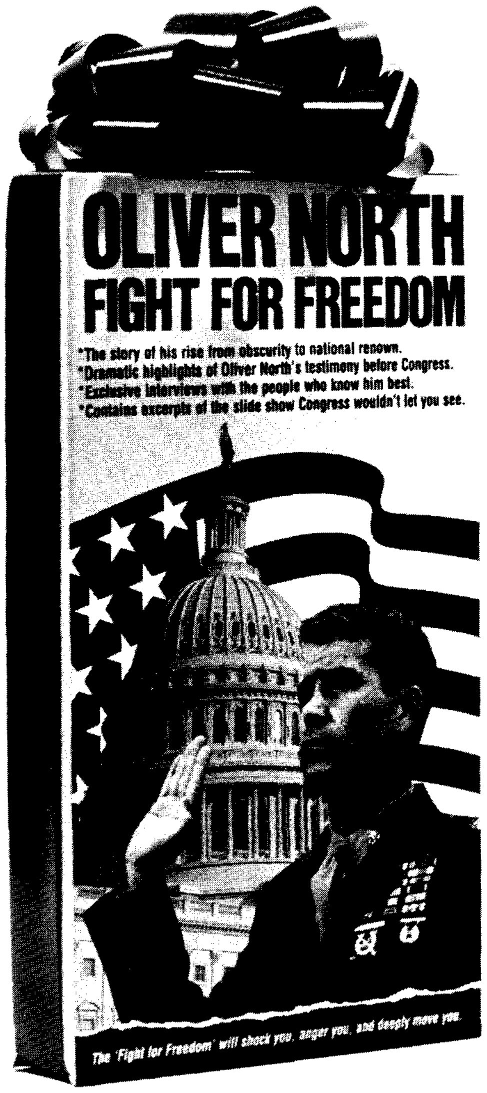
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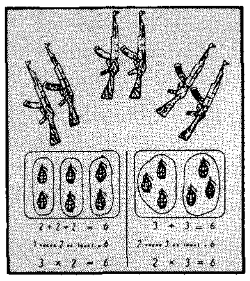

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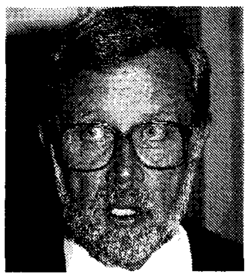
The slide show Congress wouldn't let you see; like this one taken from a Nicaraguan children's school book.



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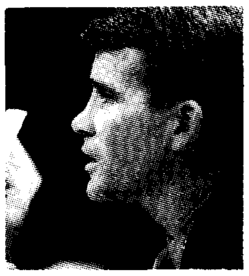

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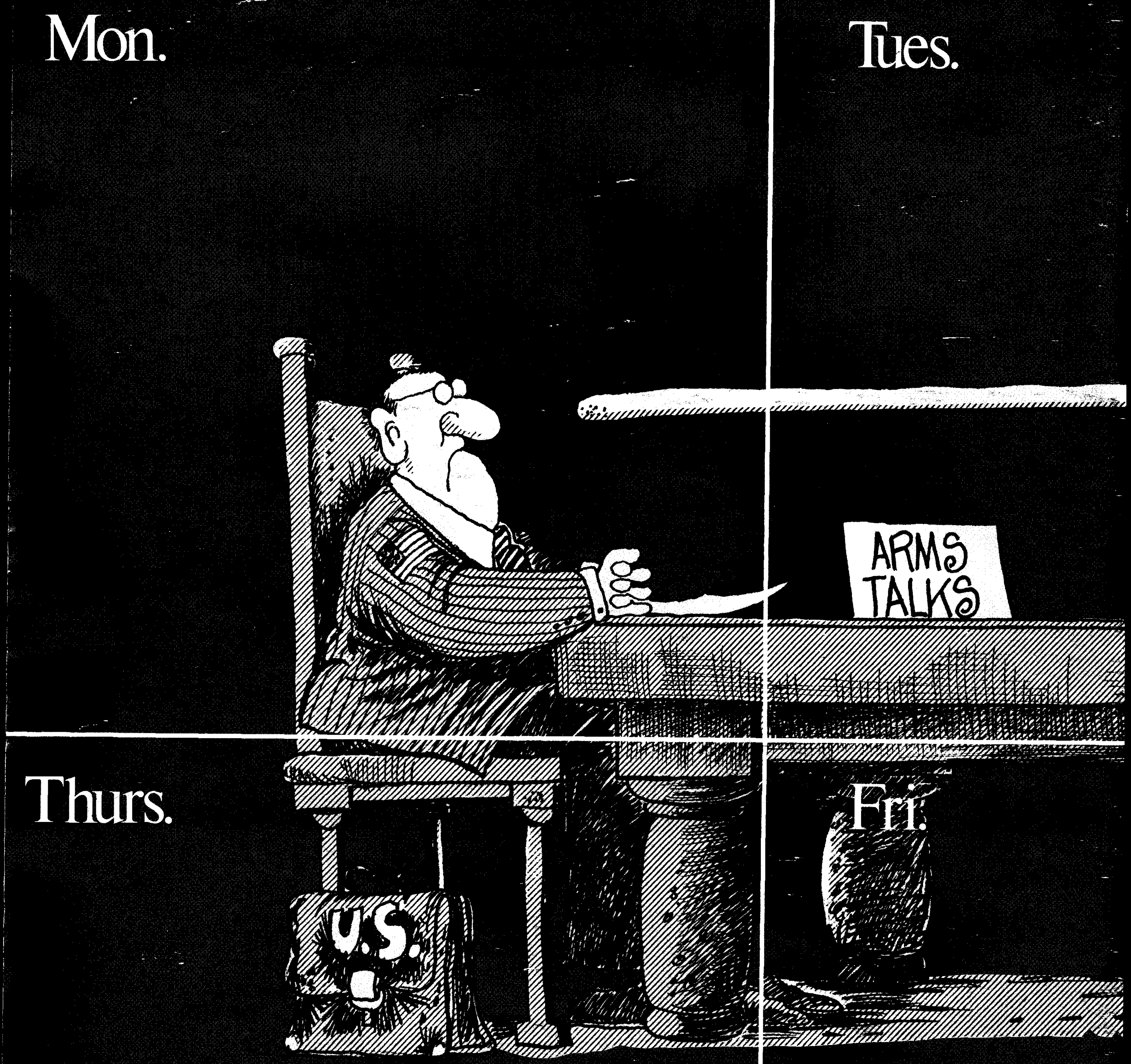

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Sometimes witty, often biting, always revealing, Perspectives brings our readers statements overheard in hallways or on the airwaves, material spotted in newspapers across the country and from other countries, lunacies and wisdom in speeches and interviews that—quite simply—help keep things in perspective.

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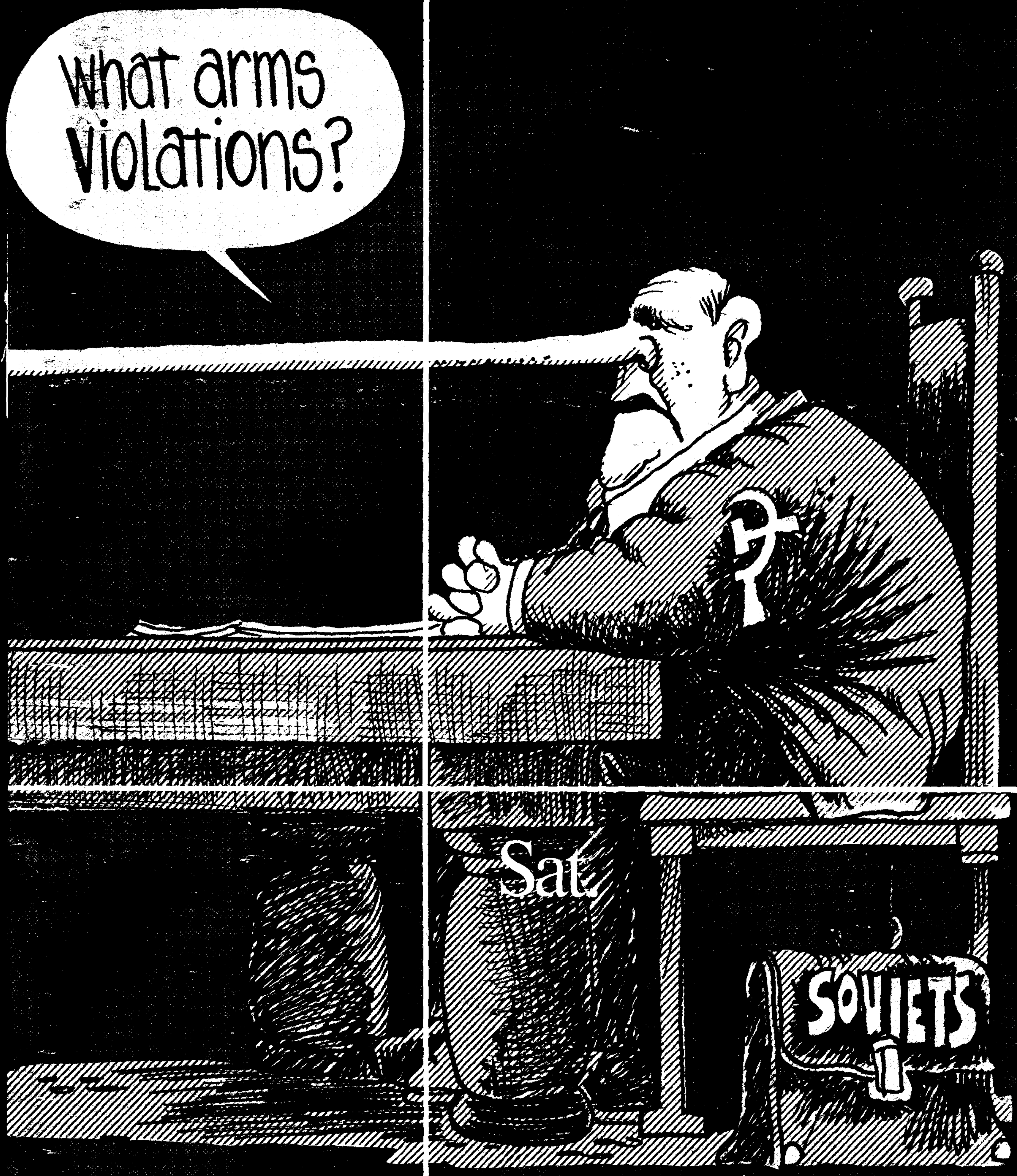
Wed.



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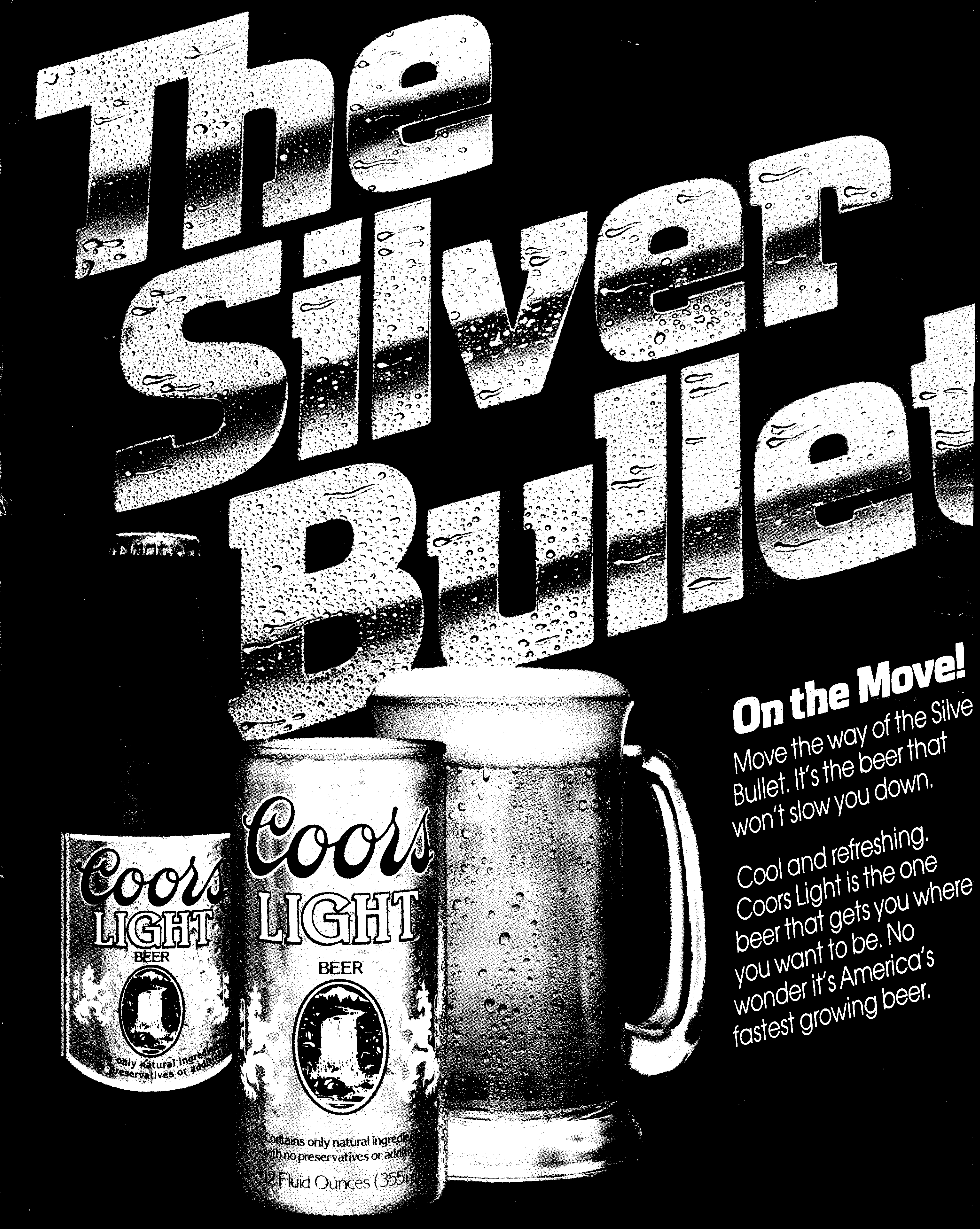
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